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Dr. Ray has written a record of love and warmth and charity and hospitality to be proud of, and it explains why The Little Church Around the Corner has become a landmark for people everywhere.

In his Foreword, Dr. Ray writes:

"Glancing down the other day from my study in the rectory tower, I saw a *Life* photographer posing a bright young fashion model against the

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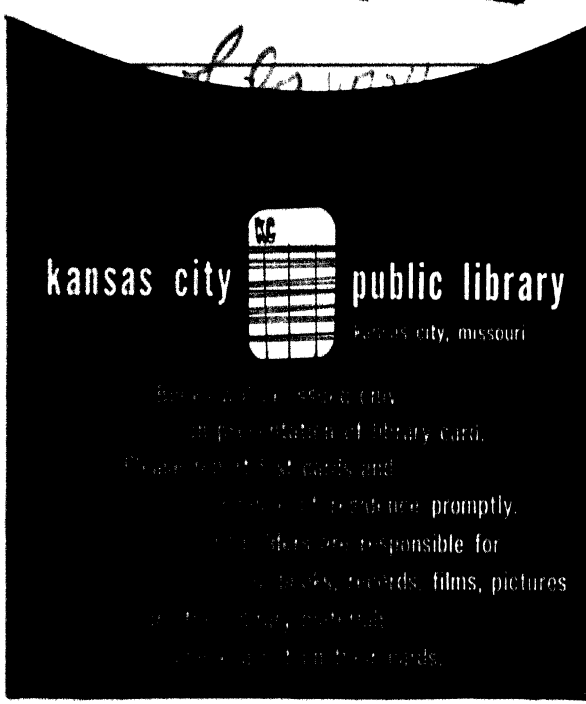

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MY LITTLE CHURCH AROUND THE CORNER

DR. J. H. RANDOLPH RAY

In collaboration with

VILLA STILES

SIMON AND SCHUSTER

NEW YORK • 1957

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To the three women
in my life—
my mother, my wife, my daughter

FOREWORD

GLANCING DOWN THE OTHER DAY from my study in the rectory tower, I saw a *Life* photographer posing a bright young fashion model against the background of our old lich-gate. This is not unusual—the outlines of our lich-gate, with its turned-up eaves and the green leaves behind it, must be familiar through pictures to thousands of people who have never been here in person. The Little Church Around the Corner is a household name. It is the church with the beautiful Bridal Altar where romantic young couples flock to get married. It is the official place of worship of hundreds of actors. It is the historic shrine where one goes to see stained-glass windows commemorating the face of Edwin Booth, Joseph Jefferson, John Drew, Richard Mansfield; and bronze tablets to Stephen Vincent Benét, William Rose Benét, Will Rogers, O. Henry. It is the haven where runaway slaves were harbored in the days of the Civil War, and where the hungry were fed in the days of the breadline. For the last third of a century it has been my life.

And what a life it has been! Channing Pollock once introduced me at a Players' banquet as "a saint who looks like a sinner." I am far from being a saint, but it is true I have little patience with long pious faces. I once wrote an article for Mrs. William Brown Meloney of the *New York Herald Tribune*, in which I stated that I thought "the capacity to be a great sinner is the selfsame capacity required to make a great saint." In fact I called the article "Frivolous Saints," and explained that the title was inspired by a woman with "an extraordinarily beautiful soul, full of human frailties and most unconventional. Changing husbands became a habit with her, yet she was so full of love toward her fellows that never did I know her to turn a deaf ear to anyone in need—no one went empty away.

Kind words, kind deeds—a prodigal in riotous giving—and many times gladly herself eating the husks that were left."

I was referring to the magnificent Nora Bayes, whose flaming dark beauty always reminded me of Jacob's wife Leah. I had seen her in the *Ziegfeld Follies* and many musical comedies, up through *Queen o' Hearts*, and I had met her offstage at a number of functions. But I did not know her well until someone told me that she was lying alone up at Roosevelt Hospital, dying of cancer. I went to see her. We chatted like friends, and she asked me to come again the next day; then the next. As we got to know each other better, she began to tell me the story of her life—her failures, her successes, her love affairs, her marriages. She had been born on the East Side, and had started to earn her own living almost before she knew right from wrong. There were phases of her life she would like to forget—"I thought I did the best I could, but it might have been better." She had been born into the Jewish faith, but had never gone to temple as a child, and so knew little about it. She asked me if I thought I could help her find her way to God.

Converting people is not in my line—I leave that to others. Still, I desperately wanted to help her, so I took her hand in mine. We prayed together for guidance and strength, and her restless spirit seemed quieter afterward. This went on for some weeks, until finally she realized her end was quite near. She asked me to baptize her. I had no holy water with me, of course, and she was failing so rapidly I feared she might not live another twenty-four hours. Therefore I baptized her right then and there, with clean, clear water I took from the pitcher. That night she died.

But it was not because of this deathbed conversion that I called Nora Bayes one of my Frivolous Saints—it was because of her great good-heartedness and charity all through her career. She was, as I said, "a prodigal in riotous giving," and I don't think she ever in her life passed by a panhandler with a contemptuous glance, or refused the plea of anyone who needed her help.

Tallulah Bankhead is another of my Frivolous Saints. I may be forgiven a partiality toward her, perhaps, for my great-grandfather, old Colonel Sledge, was the uncle of Tallulah's beautiful mother.

This makes us "kissing kin" by Alabama standards. Tallulah's father, the Speaker of the House, was a Southern Methodist who always said Grace before meals. Her mother was an Episcopalian, but died so early that Tallulah was baptized beside her coffin. There was no Episcopal church in Huntsville, Alabama, but once a month an Episcopal clergyman came around and service was held in the rooms over the feed store. Her cousins used to get all dressed up for their Sunday pilgrimage to the Methodist church, and Tallulah felt cheated—there didn't seem much point in putting on one's finery just to go to service over a feed store!

I think this feeling of being cheated out of church must have persisted with Tallulah for years; for in 1952 she came to me and said: "*Dahling*, I've been thinking. Last Sunday morning Ethel Merman got up and went to communion at St. Bartholomew's Church. All my Catholic friends get up and go to Mass. Even Bea Lillie goes to church every Sunday! Only I am an unregenerate heathen—I've never been confirmed!"

She wanted to remedy this lack, she told me, as quickly as possible. I explained that first she would have to come for instruction, and to this she agreed. That is how it happened that for several weeks in 1952, a limousine with chauffeur would pull up in front of the rectory, and a young woman with a famous mane of hair would come dashing up the path. She always brought a little hat with her, so she could cover her head when she wanted to run into the church; and people seeing her flit through the garden would say, "Is that *really* Tallulah?"

It really was, and very serious indeed about her confirmation. When I felt she was ready, I made arrangements for the ceremony to take place in St. Ambrose's Chapel at the Cathedral of St. John the Divine. On the morning of the day, Tallulah called me and said, "Dahling, I know I'm not supposed to eat anything first. But may I have a drink of water?"

"Of water," I told her. "But not anything stronger!" And I was answered by throaty laughter over the phone—for say what you will of Tallulah, she is a very honest girl.

Tallulah presented a copy of her autobiography to Bishop Boyn-

ton, who confirmed her; and after he had read it, he left it on the library table for his secretary to put away. The secretary, puzzled as to how to classify this work in an ecclesiastical library, asked where she should put it.

"Why, up there!" said the Bishop, pointing to a shelf.

"But that shelf contains the lives of the saints!" she protested.

"And what of it?" asked the Bishop. "Don't you know that from St. Augustine on, the greatest sinners have made the greatest saints?"

Tallulah, of course, is a rambunctious Democrat; and it so happened that 1952 was the year of a Presidential campaign. She is also an ardent rooter for the Giants. Thus I caught her bound for the chapel one day with a suspiciously zealous look in her eye. Taking nothing for granted where Tallulah is concerned, I asked her what she was up to.

"Why," she explained, "I simply thought I would slip in to church a minute and light a candle for the Giants—and say a few prayers for Stevenson to win!"

I had to explain to her then that one does not ask for material things or make bargains with God. She took this injunction quite literally and has tried to live up to it; and so far as I know the only "material" thing she still prays for is just before the curtain on opening night. Then she makes the simple supplication, "Oh, dear God, please don't let me make a fool of myself!"

Because of the close sympathy between the Little Church Around the Corner and the many English who come here for services, we hold memorial services whenever a British monarch dies. The first I celebrated was the requiem for King George V in 1936. Lady Peel—Beatrice Lillie—occupied the front pews with her entire company from *Set to Music*, and she joined in all the hymns and prayers and made all the responses. Having known Bea Lillie since the old days of *Charlot's Revue*, I can assure you that she is never so irresistible as when she tries to be serious. I could hear my choirboys beginning to giggle, and was terrified that at any moment they would explode into laughter. I managed to glare at them as I turned to the altar, and this checked them momentarily; but I

was never so relieved as when that service was over. And Milady, of course, had not the slightest idea of the havoc she was causing!

Sixteen years later we held a requiem for King George VI. Sir Laurence Olivier was over here with his wife, Vivien Leigh, appearing in Shaw's *Caesar and Cleopatra* and Shakespeare's *Antony and Cleopatra.* I asked Olivier if he would deliver the eulogy and he immediately said, "Oh, no, I've never done anything like that! I couldn't even think of it." But with the help of his secretary, who joined her pleas to mine, I finally persuaded him. "After all," I told him, "few people over here are well equipped to do it. You were only recently knighted by His Majesty, and you knew him personally."

I must say that once Olivier had accepted, he threw himself into the part as though it were another of his fine stage productions. I found he already knew much of the service, for his father was an Anglican clergyman; nevertheless it was wonderful to watch him coaching the members of his company, who were to act as assistants. "You must know how to genuflect properly," he told them, suiting the action to the word and the word to the action. You couldn't possibly help thinking of Hamlet giving his instructions to the players. And in the end it all went off beautifully, and was one of the most heavily attended services we ever held at the Little Church.

Someone had been foreminded enough to think of a tape recorder, and so a machine was brought in and hidden where it wouldn't be seen. This preserved the speech Sir Laurence delivered—a fortunate thing, for the tribute he paid to his dead sovereign has become a classic of its kind. The tape was flown to England to be used as part of the official burial service at Windsor, and since there was a great public demand for it, copies were made and it was put on general sale. Later, when the Queen Mother came to this country, I had the pleasure of taking tea with her atop the Empire State Building. She spoke of this record made at our church, and expressed her gratitude for the copy used at Windsor. The royalties from the recording, incidentally, were split between our own Episcopal Actors' Guild and the English Guild in Britain, which looks after the welfare of the English clergy.

It was at the conclusion of this memorial service to George VI that Gertrude Lawrence followed me into my office and said, "Now, Dr. Ray, I want you to put me down as a member of this church. I've been coming here to service ever since I first came to America, and I think it is time I actually joined." So Gertrude Lawrence became a member of our parish, although her husband, Richard Aldrich, remained a firm Presbyterian. No one realized, during the long run of *The King and I*, that this gay and spirited actress was seriously ill; and trooper that she was, she went on for months when she should have been in bed. Her death, when it happened, left us all stunned. Her husband wished "Mrs. A." to be buried from his own church; and since the Presbyterian minister was out of town, I helped his assistant make the arrangements, and myself took over part of the service. It was supposed to be a "private" funeral, but the public which so loved Gertrude Lawrence would have none of that, and I could hardly shoulder my way through the crowds.

I saw Gertrude Lawrence on many occasions, and in all of her plays; but the picture of her which is most vivid in my mind, is of that day she visited the Professional Children's School to talk to the students. *What* would she have given, she told them, to have had a school like that when she was a child, for she had been brought up in the music halls of England, and never had a chance at any learning at all. Then, suddenly glancing down at the hem of her skirt, she whirled about and demanded, "Is my slip showing?"

"No!" yelled a hundred voices in unison—and Gertie Lawrence had made another hundred friends who would always adore her.

And so go the memories of thirty-odd years. I would like to take you inside the Little Church with me, introduce you to my predecessors, the two Dr. Houghtons, and show you how this famous place of worship grew from a back room in Love Lane one hundred years ago, to a world-famous shrine which embraces a membership flung around the earth. If, in the telling of the Little Church story, I have had to tell my own story as well, please be forbearing; the two have become interwoven in my mind into one seamless fabric, and I could not separate the threads if I tried.

J. H. R. R.

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CHAPTER I

I First Meet the Little Church—Home in Mississippi—Childhood Preaching—Little Lord Fauntleroy—Emory and Henry College—Columbia—Munsey's Magazine—Brooklyn Eagle

IT WAS A GOLDEN DAY in early October 1906 when I first rounded the corner from Fifth Avenue into East Twenty-ninth Street and walked the few steps to the Church of the Transfiguration, already known the world over as the Little Church Around the Corner. Like millions of others who have made the same visit, I was primarily a sight-seer. I was twenty years old and had come up to New York from Mississippi only a few weeks before to study at Columbia University.

I already knew, and had known for years, what the Little Church would look like. As a child back home on my father's plantation, I had once found in a dresser a collection of gaily colored cards brought there by some visitor. They were souvenir cards, and on each was a picture of one of the wonderful sights to be seen in New York. There was Grant's Tomb, I recall, and the Statue of Liberty, old Fraunces Tavern—and, set back from the street like a charming little toy church behind its bright green garden, the Little Church Around the Corner. I had spent many a contented afternoon

crouched on the horsehair sofa in our big plantation parlor playing with those cards.

Now the picture was before me, exactly as I remembered it, except that now it was early autumn, and the green of the garden was touched with red and gold. I turned in at the lich-gate with its curiously curved and vaulted roof, and saw before me a statue. It was a crowned figure of Christ, sheltered there beneath the arches, a hand raised in benediction. Around the base ran an inscription: *Come to Me and I will refresh you.*

I turned to the left and entered the garden; and with that one step, an unimaginable spell of gentleness and beauty seemed to fall about me. Tall buildings and a streaming city were still just around the corner, yet I seemed to have moved backward in time and entered another world. Here all was medieval—the winding path underfoot hedged in with ivy, the trickling fountain, the trees, and beyond them the low rambling church with its gables and rafters. I was entranced.

I passed through the moving shadows of the elms, and entered the low, inviting door of the church. An organ was playing, for the vesper service was about to begin. As I walked through the vestibule, I caught a glimpse of wood paneling as smooth as old satin, and saw that the church opened out all around me into unexpected small chapels, into niches and alcoves that gleamed like jewels from the light streaming down from the stained glass above. It was unlike any church I had seen in my life; no regular plan, but a charming improvisation that held a new surprise and a new joy everywhere one turned to look. I could hardly wait to explore it further, but meantime I found my way to a pew.

The Episcopal service was not new to me, for I had been brought up in the Episcopal faith. But in any event, I doubt if I would have remembered much of that particular vespers. A spell was upon me, and the longer I sat there the stronger it grew. I can't clearly explain it, but I began to feel myself a part of this church. It wasn't only its beauty, though that was enchanting; it was more, I believe, the deep spirit of warmth that pervaded the place. I felt I was home. And

with that sensation, came a slow inner certainty that somehow, some day, this is *where I would be.*

To show how amazing all this was even to me, let me tell you that I was, when this happened, not even religious. I had spent four years at college, been exposed to the usual skepticism and scientific doubts, and was proud to call myself an enlightened agnostic. To be sure, as a youngster I had been rather pious. I had attended church with my family, and been more than a little fascinated by the bishops and other clergymen who came to share our hospitality. We always had plenty of room on the Mississippi plantation, and we often entertained very high ecclesiastics, as well as very minor ones.

One of these guests, whom I vividly remember, was a famous Methodist bishop. He would partake of my father's toddies and mint juleps, but in a gingerly manner. First quoting the Scriptures, "A little wine for the stomach's sake," he would raise his glass and sip at it guiltily, as though he half expected a bolt from the blue. The Episcopal bishop, on the other hand, upped his glass and downed its contents with no apology at all.

I liked the Episcopal bishop. I was also impressed by the robes our local rector wore at Sunday service. When one of my pet ducks or chickens died, I would put on my mother's long black riding skirt by way of a cassock, tie a white apron around my neck for a surplice, and take my place upon the gallery. This was high enough so that I could look down into the yard as though from a pulpit; and to a congregation of small Negro playmates gathered below, I would preach a long and sorrowful funeral oration. When we had all been reduced to tears, we would sing "Hark from whence cometh a doleful sound," and proceed to the "graveyard." To this day I can hear Mammy Liza exclaiming to my mother, "Lord God, Mis' Alice, that chile is goin' to be a preacher for shore!" And my mother would smile happily, for that, as it happened, was her tenderest wish.

My father, however, wanted me to study law. I was the last of his sons, a child born of his fourth wife after the rest of his sons were grown up and married, and he thought I would do better in some sort of profession than by remaining on the land. He had been

one of Lee's officers—Captain Jackson Harvell Ray of the Army of Virginia—and had remained a prisoner at Point Lookout until five or six months after the conclusion of the war. He had been a well-to-do planter when the fighting began—he had owned, as I recall, a plantation in the Yazoo Valley, another on the Pearl River, and about eight hundred acres all told of good cotton-bearing land.

After his release as a prisoner of war, he returned to the old plantation some six miles from the county seat at Canton, and there I was born. Later, we moved to my mother's homestead at Madison, where nothing remained of the original manor but a hole in the ground. Here Father built an unpretentious but rambling and comfortable house which he called Gable Shack.

All our neighbors were landed proprietors and ex-slaveholders who were now reduced to patching and poaching to try to get along, and there was much visiting back and forth and comparing of escutcheons by way of consolation. Father regretted the past too, but he showed unusual realism and enterprise in facing the days of Reconstruction. He sold all his land except the one hundred and thirty acres we lived on, and began to practice a system of agriculture just being introduced—the rotation of crops. I remember his pride when his first crop of strawberries was harvested and packed. He was the first man to ship a whole carload of strawberries from Mississippi to the markets up North.

Ordinarily I ran around the place happily in bare feet and jeans. But Mother succumbed, like so many mothers of her period, to the pernicious influence of Frances Hodgson Burnett; and so when company was arriving, she would dress me up like Little Lord Fauntleroy. "You're making a sissy of that boy!" Father would roar in masculine outrage. "He looks a perfect fool!" But it was not until I had quite outgrown the velvet jacket that Mother could resign herself to putting the costume away and cutting off my curls. In fact, after her death, just a few years ago, we found the curls among her keepsakes—treasured, apparently for more than sixty years!

Though all my half-brothers and half-sisters were so grown-up

that they seemed more like uncles and aunts than members of my own generation, I did have a playmate of about my own age. This was my little foster-sister, Alice Sledge Ray, the granddaughter of Colonel Sledge, who was related to my mother. I loved Alice exactly as though she were my own full sister, and drafted her into all my studies and games.

Our early schooling was right there at home. We had a governess, Miss Helen Stewart, who taught us to read, and who instilled, in me particularly, a deep love of history. I doubt if modern educators would approve of the way she taught this subject, for our "facts" were derived mainly from the Waverley novels. Sherwood Forest was far more real to me than the everyday woods around our plantation where I went to chase rabbits with my collie dog, Boss; and on one occasion I became so carried away in my defense of Robert the Bruce that I mistook Alice and Miss Helen for "a pair of caitiff churls," and drove them out of the house with a broomstick sword. It was this kind of thing that made Miss Helen report to my parents that I was "a boy of strong imagination." I was always acting out my fantasies and daydreams as though they were real.

At the age of ten or so, I attended a local grade school for two or three years, and then my father decided it was time I pursued my education in a more serious manner. They shipped me off to Greensboro, Alabama, where we had hosts of relatives on both sides of the family, and enrolled me in a private high school for boys. For the first time in my life, I knew what it was to be shy and unhappy.

The school, which was affiliated with Southern Methodist University, was run by a Methodist clergyman, and we had to get up early every morning to attend service in the chapel. Discipline *en masse* was something new in my life, and I detested it heartily. Also, some of our subjects were taken at the University itself, and consequently there was a great deal of bustling about and confusion. Even now, and with the best will in the world, I can recall only one pleasurable memory from the entire six months I spent in Greensboro, Alabama. While I was there the Spanish-American War came to an end, and the whole town turned out to hail the return of a

conquering hero. This was Lieutenant Richmond P. Hobson, who had sunk the collier *Merrimac* at the neck of Santiago Harbor, bottling up the Spanish fleet and thereby helping to hasten the end of hostilities. I hurrahed myself hoarse in a perfect delirium of patriotic fervor, and worked off some of the pent-up exuberance for which I could find no outlet at school.

My next adventure in schooling was at Abingdon, Virginia, where I spent four years at Emory and Henry College. Here I was happier, for I was a fairly decent student when I enjoyed my work, and I began to study languages—French, Latin, Greek. My studies were directed toward obtaining a Bachelor-of-Arts degree; but in my senior year, as graduation drew near, I began to think I would like to be a doctor. How I ever fancied I was equipped for the medical profession, either by aptitude or temperament, is now one of those mysteries. I had a half-brother, Dr. Thomas Jackson Ray, who was a very able physician, and perhaps I thought the gift would "run in the family." At any rate, I had an urge to be useful to humanity in some as yet unspecified way, and there is no denying that doctors are useful. I went blithely ahead and enrolled myself for the coming fall in the College of Physicians and Surgeons at Columbia University.

Fortunately for me, I found out my mistake very early in the game. When I got to New York, I looked up two schoolmates who had been a year or two ahead of me at Emory and Henry, and who were both studying medicine. They offered to let me come and look in at one of their anatomy lessons at a large city hospital. I don't know what I expected; surely I must have realized, if I had stopped to think about it, that medical students have to learn dissection, and that dissection is done on cadavers! Anyway, I walked all unsuspectingly into a largish room filled with medical students bending over their tables—then did a double-take of undistilled horror when I saw what they were working on. I rushed for the door, my stomach telling me at once that I was in the wrong course! As soon as I recovered, I went right back to Columbia, and registered for the law.

Law was more to my liking. I lived quite comfortably at Living-

ston Hall, sharing a room with three of my fraternity brothers from Beta Theta Pi. One was a youth from Kentucky who loved to play poker. Another was a lively lad who had lived in South America, and who devoted his spare time to a study of American girls. As for me, I saved every penny I could out of my allowance from home, to go to the theater.

Brander Matthews was then one of the greatest living authorities on the art of the theater, and he taught at Columbia. I enrolled in his course as an elective subject, and could hardly wait between lectures. He was a most inspired teacher, both on the history of drama and the contemporary stage. I had always "loved to act," and had taken part in class plays at Emory and Henry. Now I went out also for the Columbia Players and the Columbia College Dramatic Society, and spent a great deal of time—more time, I fear, than was wise—on this fascinating sideline.

It was due to Brander Matthews' recommendations that I saw the young and entrancing Ethel Barrymore in *Alice Sit-by-the-Fire*, the elfin Maude Adams in *Peter Pan,* and the incomparable Bernhardt in her great hit, *L'Aiglon.* No, I was not squandering the small substance sent me from home—in those days you sat like a king in the gallery for only fifty cents. Three or four of us from the Brander Matthews classes would make up a party, go to see John Drew or Minnie Maddern Fiske or Mrs. Leslie Carter, then adjourn afterward to the nearest saloon to compare our reactions. Yes, to a saloon—for we were all strapped for money and we had made the miraculous discovery that for one beer, five cents, or for two beers, a dime, you could eat as much as you could hold of the free lunch so copiously supplied in those places. You had your choice of rosy sliced ham, small Vienna sausage, huge crunchy slabs of bread, pickles, spiced peppers, thick golden cheeses, and even hot dishes, including the inevitable Boston baked beans. I have often wondered how the taverns of those days ever paid expenses.

I spent so much time on the Brander Matthews courses and dramatic group activities, that law exams had a way of sneaking up quickly and catching me unaware. I would then have to retire from

the world for a while and bone up on what I had missed. That is no way to study, and I do not recommend it. When examination day came, I would go to the hall with nothing but a fountain pen and what I had managed to cram into my head. Imagine my amazement, therefore, when I saw that a large percentage of the others had come completely equipped with notes, trots, and answers! They consulted these furtively under the very noses of teachers and monitors, and far from being held in disgrace, they seemed to be doing the accepted thing. I could hardly believe it. We had had the honor system at Emory and Henry—every man on his own, with no one to watch us—and if any student had "cribbed" at exams, he would never have dared to show his face on the campus. But this was the "watch system," surrounded by guards, and the result seemed to be that all self-responsibility went out the window. It was a profound moral lesson in the trusting of people, and I have never forgotten it.

It was during this first year at Columbia that I broke into print. Somehow I got the idea of writing an article on "Dramatic Incidents in Invention," describing Fulton's trip up the Hudson in his steamboat, and similar events. I could have written the piece first, and then tried to sell it, but I preferred to tackle it the other way round. I knew that Brander Matthews, who had been very indulgent toward me, was a close friend of Bob Davis, the fiery editor of *Munsey's Magazine*. I asked Professor Matthews if he would give me a note of introduction to Davis, and he lightly obliged.

The next day I presented myself at the editorial department of *Munsey's*, asked to see Mr. Davis, and sent in the note. I was soon shown into Davis' office; but when he got a look at my artless freshman countenance, and learned that I not only had never written anything in my life, but had not even troubled to write the article I had come to him to talk about, he really hit the roof!

"This is no place to learn to write!" he informed me—not exactly that way, but with the verbal embellishment for which he was famous. His face was so red, and he seemed to be having such a time with his breath, that I was truly alarmed. I was backing out,

I loved the bustle of the newsroom, the sense of a whole swarming metropolis which I got when I raced out to cover a fire or a brawl, or even an undertakers' ball; and I reveled in the feeling of taking an active part at last in the business of life. Up until now my existence had been pretty much protected; I had gone from classroom to classroom. Now I began to see things that opened my eyes to rawer aspects of life, and I began to understand a little more of humanity's struggle.

The panic of 1907 hit the country while I was working on the *Eagle*, and I saw my first breadlines. I was to encounter them again, years later, in 1930—but by then I would be able to do something about them to the best of my ability. Those first breadlines of 1907 were shocking beyond description. I had seen plenty of poverty in the South, but never outright starvation; and from that moment on, my well-ordered world never sat quite so securely about me. Bankruptcy, suicide, and the whole nightmare troupe of horrors that come with desperate times, began to be an almost routine part of our daily assignments. I covered my share of it with a certain amount of professional detachment, but something happened inside. I was troubled in off moments by a very deep and personal unrest. Gone was the lighthearted kick I had got out of my work in the beginning, and so I changed jobs. I quit the staff of the *Eagle* and went with *Nugent's Bulletin.*

Nugent's was a monthly publication supplying market information to those engaged in the garment and fur trades. My job was to take price quotations off the wire, and to compile merchandise data from various sections of the country. The work was easy enough, but it so happened that *Nugent's*, at that time, was dominated by a woman who thrived on office intrigue. She made life unbearable for all of us, until one hot day in June, two others and myself decided she could do a far better job of running the place without us—and simply walked out.

This left me without a job, but I must confess that my sudden independence was not as brave as it sounds. I had just attained my twenty-first birthday, and with my coming of age, I had fallen into

money. It was not a fortune to set me up for life, but it was a tidy sum for that time—about twenty-five hundred dollars maturing to me from an uncle's estate. It was summer vacation, with no classes at Columbia until the following fall, and two of my friends were just about to start out for a bicycle tour of England, Ireland and Wales. With money in my pocket and no job to hold me, I decided to go with them.

CHAPTER II

England—I Decide to Study for the Ministry—General Seminary —I Become a Sunday-school Teacher—Transfiguration and the Church of the Heavenly Rest—Hell's Kitchen—Byrd Wise—I Meet Mollie—Dean Hoffman—Teachers and Students.

THAT FIRST TRIP ABROAD stands out in my life, not so much for the things I saw and the places I visited, as for the fact that I got far enough away from myself to gain some perspective. It may be that those beautiful old abbeys in England helped to open my eyes. At any rate, as I looked back on my two years in New York, it suddenly struck me that for a young man who was an "agnostic and free-thinker," I had spent a good deal of my time going around to visit churches. I had liked to sit in them quietly when no service was on, and I had even enjoyed the music and ceremony when everyone was there. Taken all in all, though I belonged to no parish, I was quite a busy churchgoer. I still remembered that curious sensation I had had the first time I entered the Little Church Around the Corner—that intuitive feeling that there I belonged, and there I was destined to be—and now I began to face what all of this meant.

I went back to my childhood. I remembered my mother's face when old Mammy Liza predicted I was going to be a preacher. I remembered how I used to dress up and preach from the gallery.

I remembered the long line of preachers who used to stay at our house, and how much I had looked forward to the visit of the Episcopal bishop. And finally I asked myself what on earth I had been doing these last two years, studying law, playing at journalism, when all the time I was happiest elsewhere! The answer was simple, now that an ocean lay between me and all my confusions. I wanted to enter the church. The realization came to me as something I had always known in the secret places of my mind, and brought with it an almost overwhelming flood of joy and relief.

We sailed back to New York on an old tramp steamer, and I lost no time in getting home to Mississippi. I told my mother at once of my new decision, and she was so happy she could hardly speak through her tears. Old Mammy Liza kept wiping her eyes with her apron and exclaiming, "I knowed it! I knowed it! I always said that chile was boun' fer the Lawd!" But my father was better able to contain his enthusiasm. All very well, he allowed a bit sourly, provided I meant it, and intended at last to stick to one thing!

I went down to Jackson to see Bishop Bratton, head of our diocese. He was delighted, and immediately tried to persuade me to go to the University of the South at Suwanee, Tennessee. I was determined, however, to study in New York, for I still loved the theater, and did not want to lose sight of my friends; so finally, with good grace, he transferred me to the parish of Zion and St. Timothy on East Fifty-seventh Street, in the New York diocese.

It was that September, in the fall of 1908, that I entered General Theological Seminary in Chelsea Square on Ninth Avenue, to begin my three years' studies for Holy Orders in the Episcopal Church. The Seminary is called "General" because it draws its students from all over the country, rather than from any one diocese; and it is undoubtedly one of the most beautiful schools of its kind in America. The land on which it stands was originally given by Clement C. Moore, who wrote "The Night Before Christmas." When he made his home there, the Hudson River ran well within the property bounds. Today it lies several blocks away, for land was filled in to create the Twelfth Street docks; and as this land was created, the

Seminary was able to realize a sizable revenue from the rentals upon it.

The school, which sits in the heart of picturesque old Chelsea, is very English in appearance as well as tradition. The beautiful buildings and halls, which were designed by Charles C. Haight, the same architect who built Columbia University, are laid out on the plan of the English quadrangle, and are heavily covered by green English ivy. You would come off Ninth Avenue, with its roaring elevated trains and dingy shops, and enter into a world of unbelievable peace. In the center of the quiet green close stood the lovely Chapel of the Good Shepherd, while around ranged the façades of the various buildings and dormitories—Sherred, Pintard, Jarvis, Eigenbrodt, Hobart, Dehon, White, Edson, and Hoffman Halls. The dormitories were each five stories high, and each story contained a suite for two students—two bedrooms and a large living room, most comfortably furnished and equipped with a fireplace.

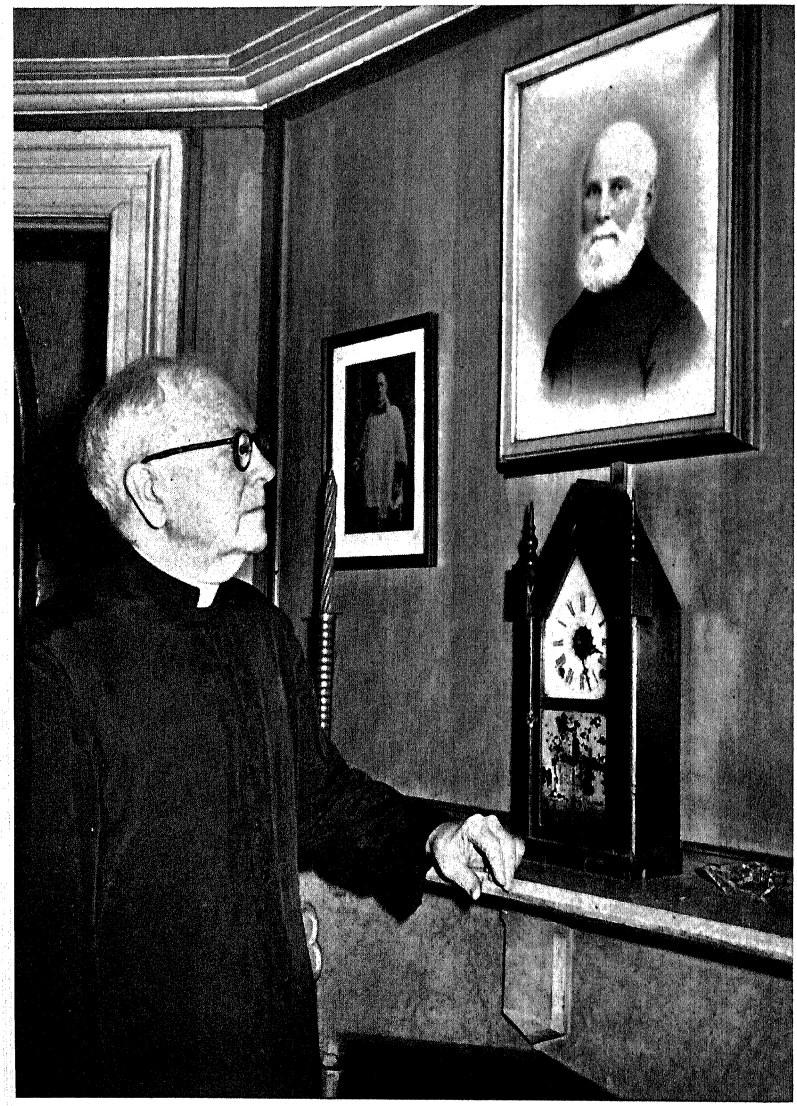
I was assigned right away to Edson Hall, to share a suite with William Leopold Essex, who now is Bishop of Springfield, Illinois. I already knew Bill Essex from Columbia days, and we hit it off well. Moreover, Bill was an upperclassman, a senior; and this enabled me to meet most of his classmates as well as my own, and to enlarge my acquaintance.

Our day started off pleasantly with eight-o'clock Communion in the Chapel of the Good Shepherd; and I enjoyed this so much that during the three years I was there, I never missed attendance unless I was ill. That was very seldom, for the life was a regular one and I had a sturdy constitution. After the service, we repaired to Hoffman Hall, the refectory, for breakfast.

And what a meal that was! Three days a week we had beefsteak for breakfast, with baked sweet or white potatoes—or, if we preferred, baked beans and pork with corn bread! On alternate days, the breakfast menu offered us our choice of mutton chops, fried fish, veal cutlets, sausage, fried liver and bacon, griddle cakes and syrup, or just plain ham and eggs. The last, presumably, was for the light eaters. All this was in accord with the old-fashioned as-

ILLUSTRATION SECTION

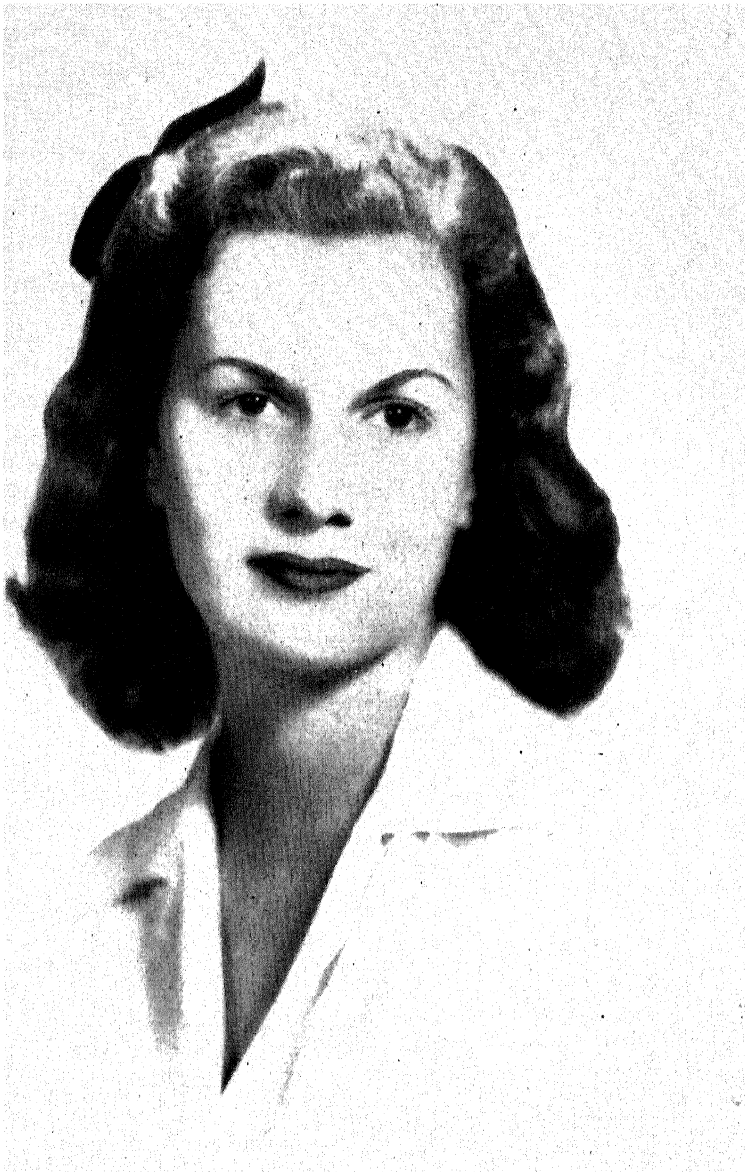
Dr. J. H. Randolph Ray



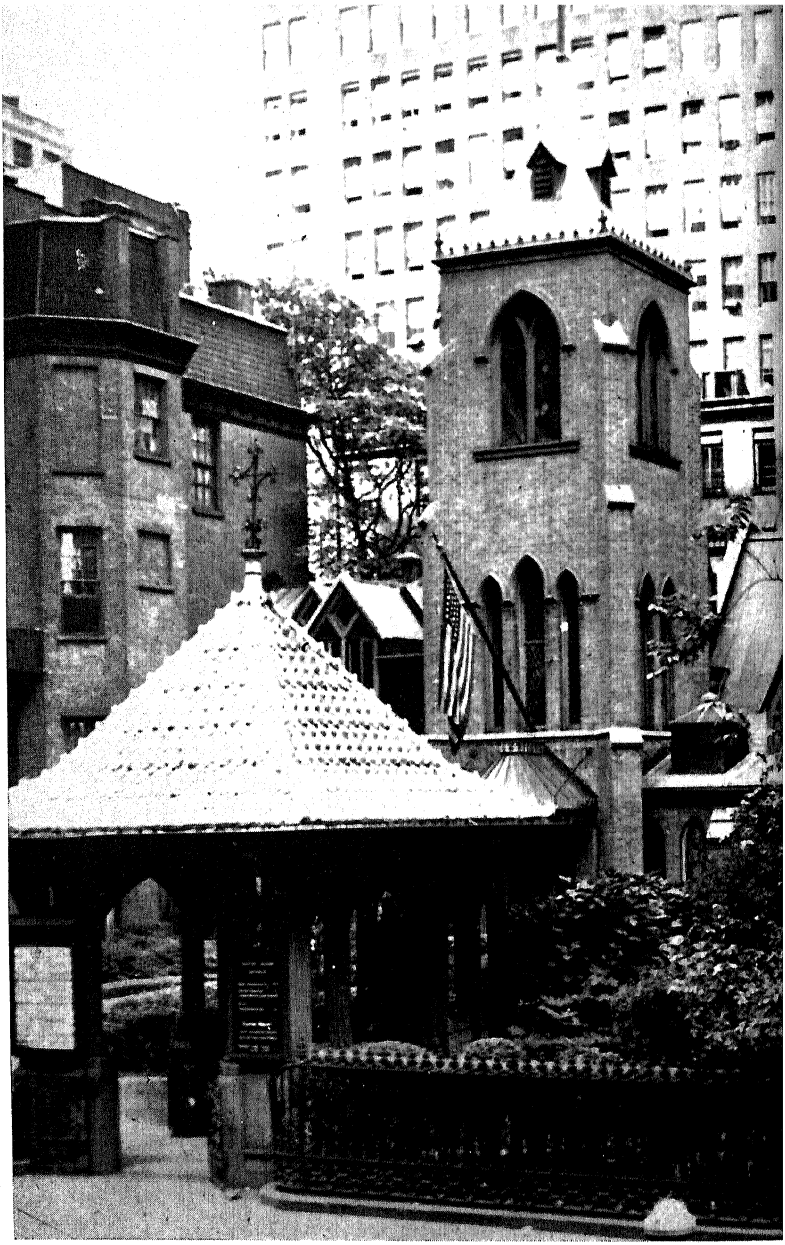
The three rectors of The Little Church Around the Corner: above the Seth Thomas clock is the founder, Dr. George Hendric Houghton; to the left is the second rector, Dr. George Clarke Houghton; and the third rector, Dr. J. H. Randolph Ray

Dr. Ray's mother

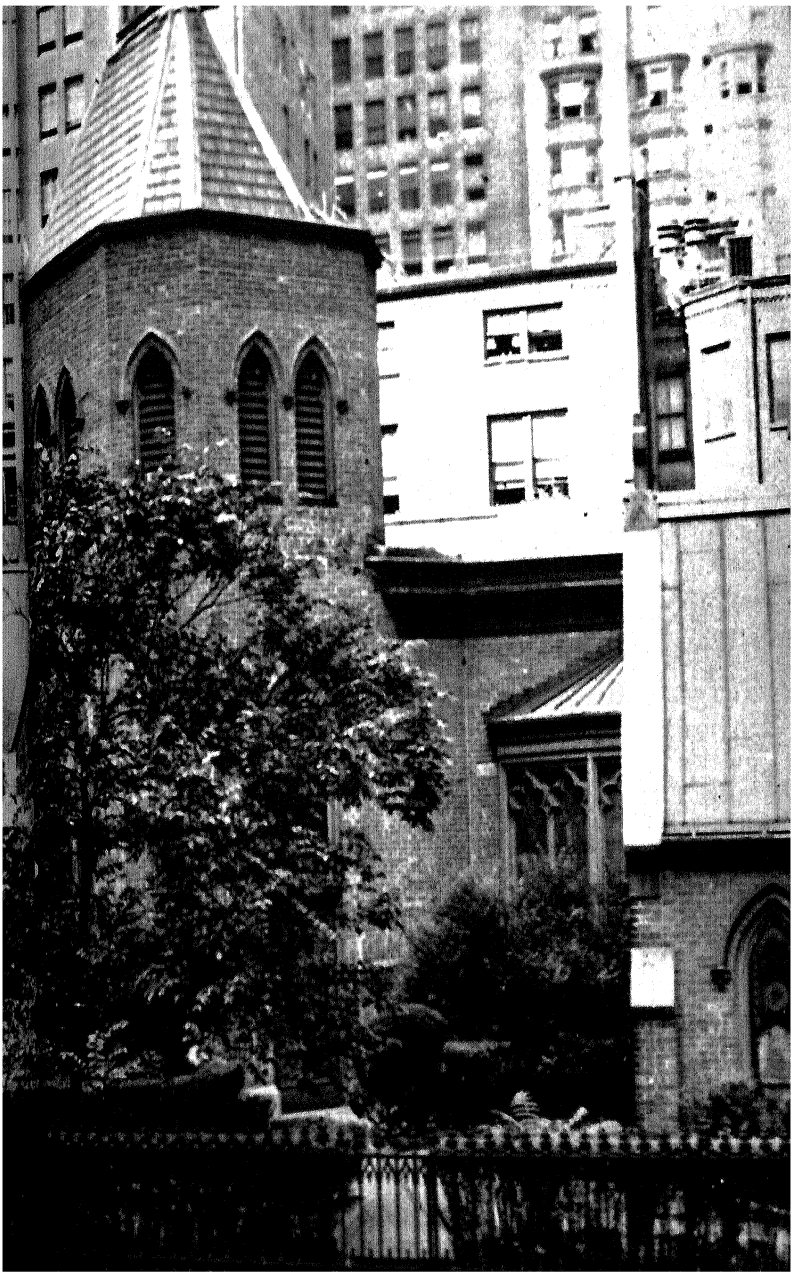
Dr. Ray's wife, Mollie

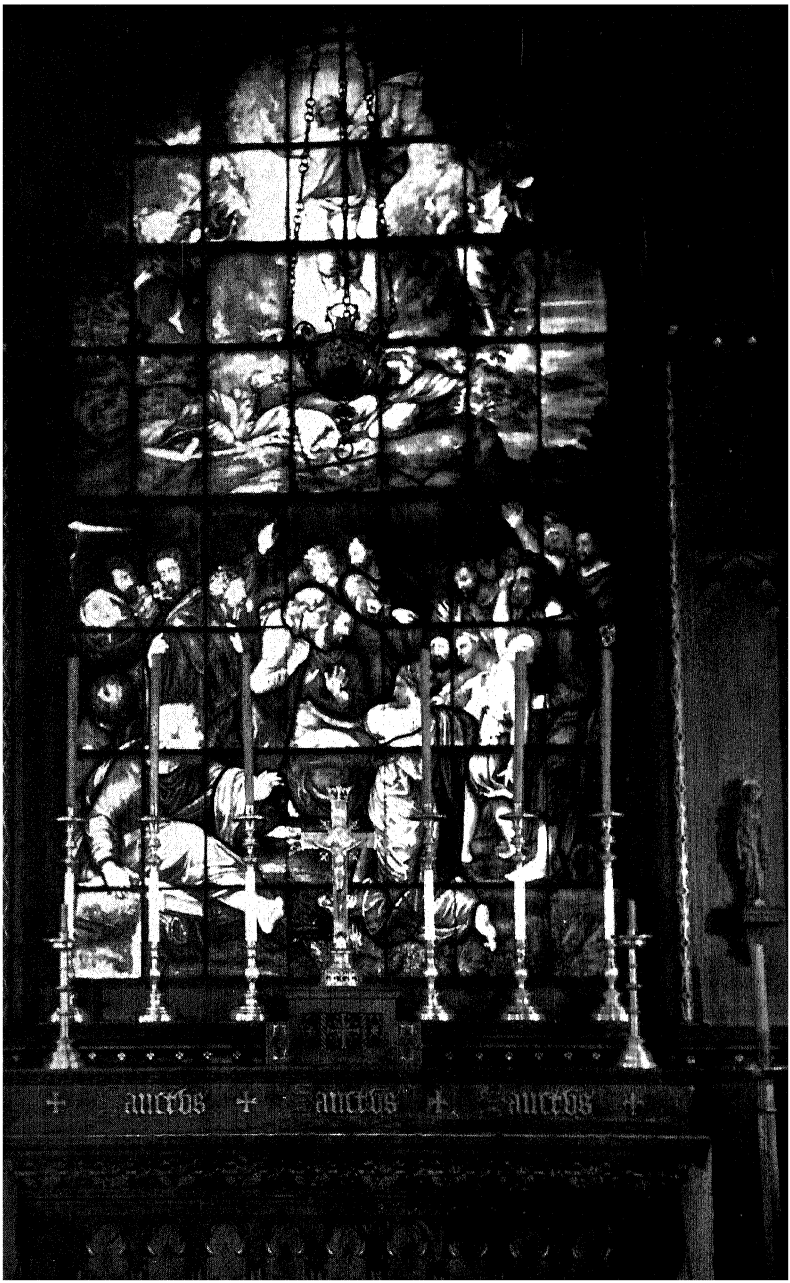


Dr. Ray's daughter, Kathryna



The Little Church Around the Corner




AUCTUS
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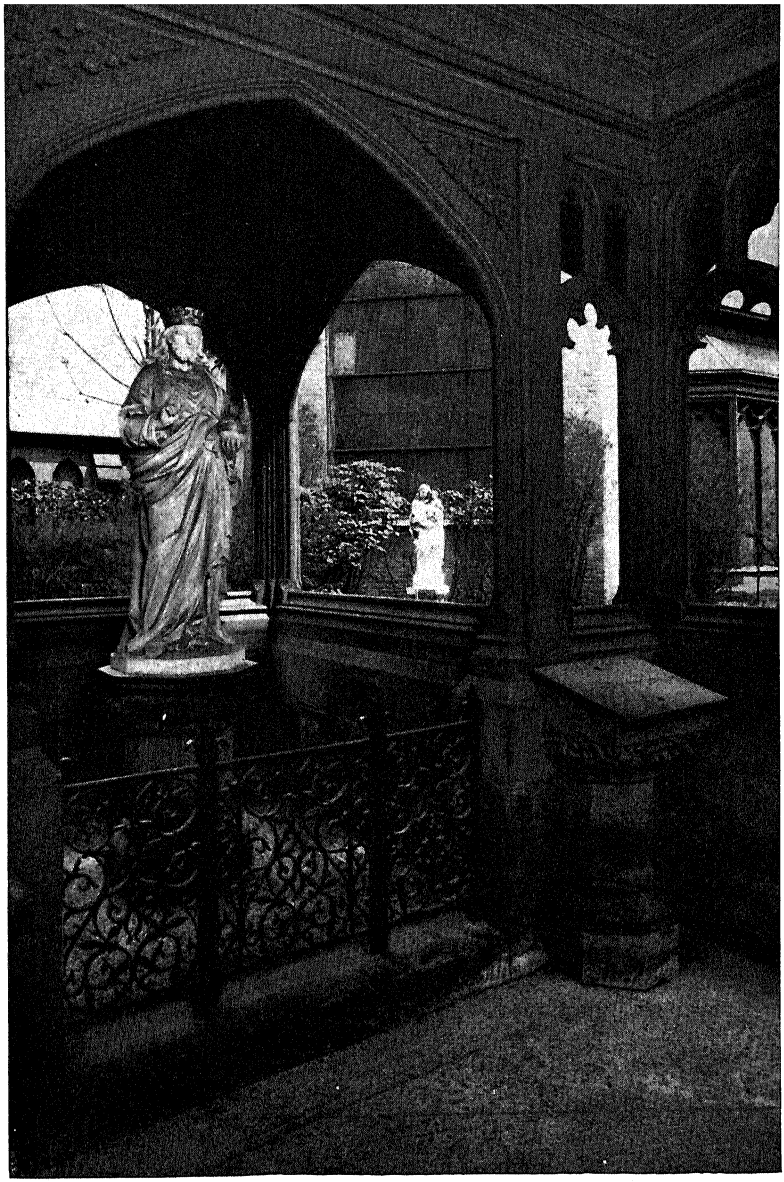
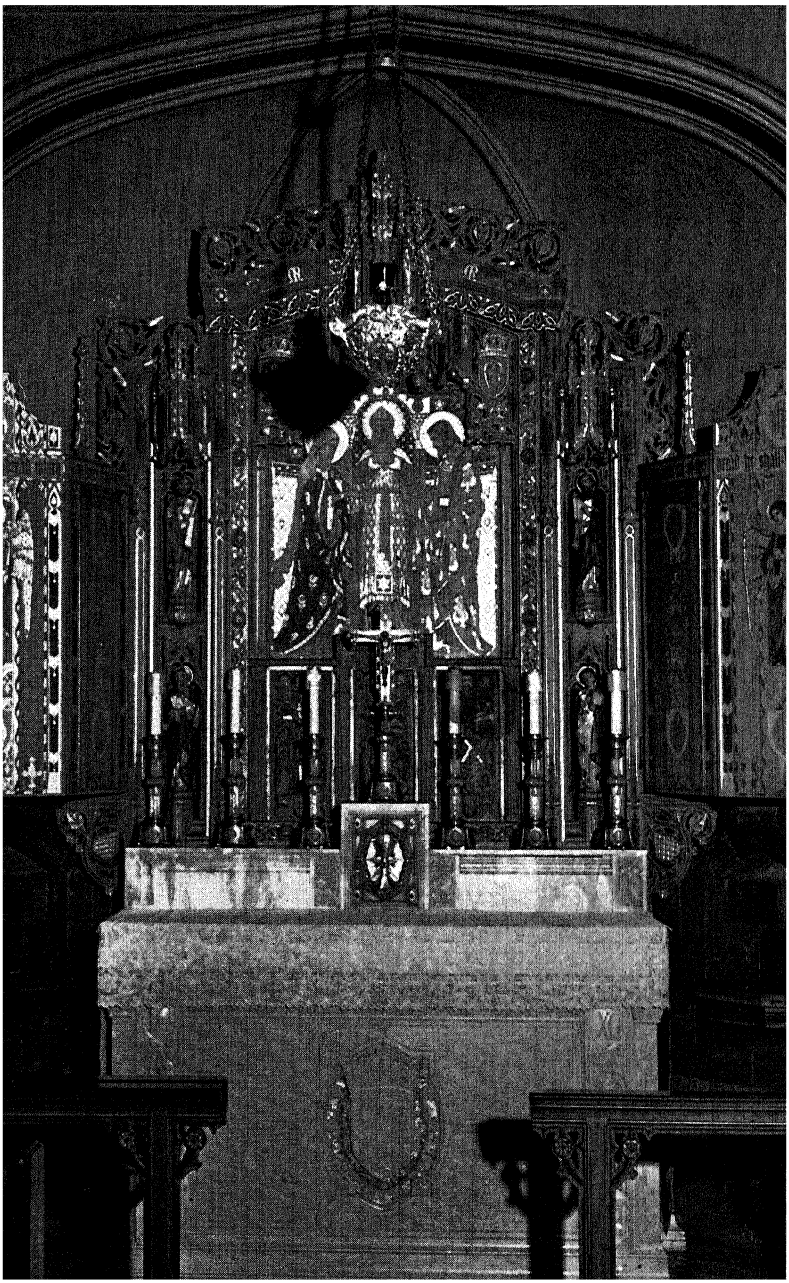
Baptismal Font

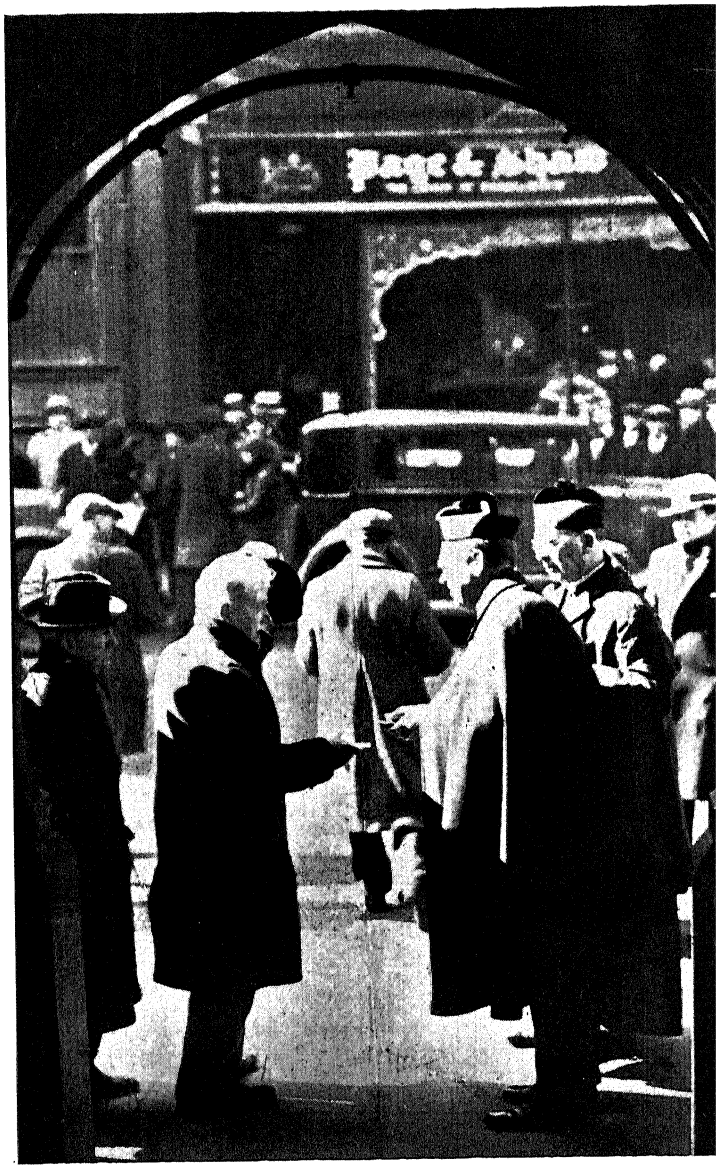
St. Joseph's Chapel:
The Transfiguration Window
and funerary candlesticks

The Joseph Jefferson Window



Our Wayside Shrine

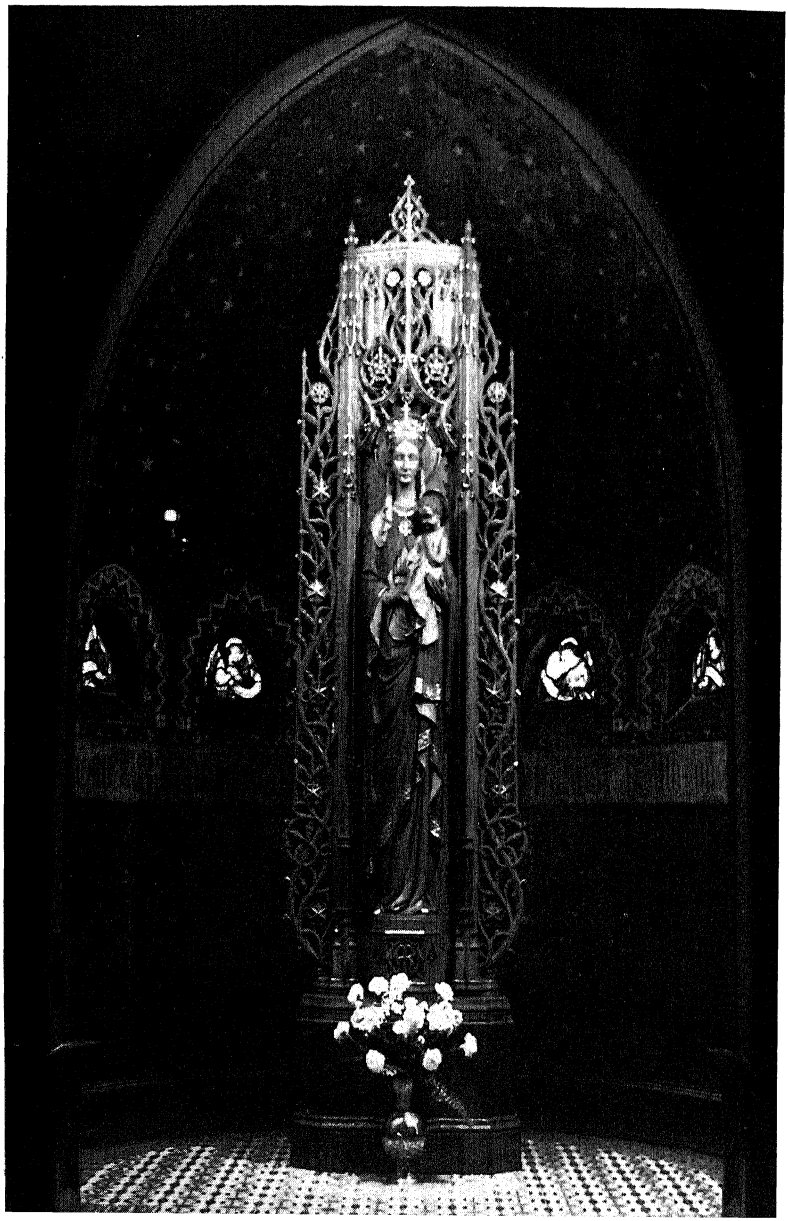




The Breadline, 19

The Bride's Altar

The Madonna Shrine



sumption that "three square meals a day" meant breakfast, dinner, and supper—not breakfast, lunch, and dinner. Supper was the mere light snack we now have in the middle of the day.

I've often been asked what preliminary education one must have to study for Orders. The requirements stipulate a college diploma, plus several years of Latin and Greek. I had studied these languages, but now I continued them, and added theology and Hebrew to my curriculum. Hebrew was difficult because of its alphabet, all tracery and dots, and our professor of Biblical languages used to warn us whimsically to watch out for fly-specks—they could change the whole meaning of the text we were preparing! In the late afternoon, when classes were over, we returned to our dormitories for the most delightful hour of the day. This was real English "teatime," when all the students invited friends from outside, even occasionally a girl friend. The open fires were lighted, the candles were set ablaze, and cakes and cookies appeared with great pots of tea. Oh, how pleasant it was to sit in that cheerful glow with one's friends, talking and talking, while the daylight slowly faded outside! Many a romance blossomed in those quiet surroundings, and many a lifelong friendship was formed.

At last the bell rang for evensong; and guests and all, we left the open fires and went down to chapel. The guests took their places just in front of the chancel screen, while we students, in caps and gowns, sat in the stalls. When the evensong was over—the serenely beautiful evensong of the Episcopal Church—the guests said farewell and went upon their way. If you had an invitation to dine out, you were free to go with them. Otherwise, you repaired to Hoffman Refectory for a light supper, the final meal of the day.

And how about the evenings? A good many of mine, I freely confess, were spent at the theater. I was much too fond of human company to refuse an invitation, and I was frequently off to dinner at somebody's house, with a theater party afterward. If this seems strange in a theology student, then let me explain that I had made a resolution almost on the very day I had entered the Seminary. It was more than a resolution, it was a sort of private credo, and it

went like this: *I shall never become a stuffed shirt. I don't want to be a saint, or even overly pious. I want to practice my religion, but I also want to be a human being. I promise myself that wherever I go, I will not do anything that will make it improper for me to leave that place and go directly to answer a call as a minister of God. Whether I go to a dinner party, theater party, or any social gathering, I shall always hold myself ready and fit to answer a sick call, to hear a confession, or to respond to any other emergency.* I have kept this credo before me over all of these years, and it has guided my conduct. For even after one is ordained a priest—as Episcopal ministers are called—one is still human, and must remain human to keep the common touch. I therefore set out from the beginning to do two things: to be as good a clergyman as I could be, by God's grace, and to honor my fellow-man by remaining in his world. After all, it is a beautiful earth God created for us here, and I feel He meant us to love and enjoy it.

On the evenings when we did not go out, we sat before our open fires preparing lessons or examinations, or perhaps working together on some paper to be handed in as an essay. Those were really happy days. The Seminary, I repeat, was very like an English school, and the student gained much from his fellows, and from the community life which we all shared in common.

Rarely, however, did we get away on weekends. Sunday is, after all, the busiest day in the week of any churchman, and it was on Sunday that we applied the things we had learned. All students were assigned to teach Sunday school at some one of the many Episcopal churches throughout the city, and when I was asked which one I preferred, naturally I chose the Little Church Around the Corner! Thus I came one step nearer to the realization of my dream, or at least got a foot inside the vestibule door.

Transfiguration had, at that time, a very large Sunday school, though I must explain that it was attended almost entirely by colored children from other parts of the city. This was because the first Dr. Houghton, founder of the church, had established the custom during the Civil War and after, of offering particular refuge to

the families and descendants of one-time slaves. We will come to all this later, for it is part of the church's history, and a most important part.

The Sunday school was held in the big gabled attic up over the chantry, and every Sunday I helped to preside over these sizable classes and interpret the lessons. I also caught a glimpse of the second rector, Dr. George Clarke Houghton, though I did not get to meet him. He was a grief-stricken man, almost completely immersed in mourning for his wife whom he had lost six years before, and he was largely withdrawn from the life of the church. He did, however, distribute enormous baskets of food to the children at Thanksgiving and Christmas, and I can still hear the cries of excitement in the Sunday school attic when those baskets appeared. They contained everything needful for a big holiday dinner for an entire family—turkey, vegetables, fruit, and even candy and nuts.

But teaching at Transfiguration was only one of my jobs. We all had several assignments outside of the Seminary, designed to help us gain a little experience, and earn a little money to help with expenses. Thus, during my first year, I was also a lay reader at Zion and St. Timothy—a lay reader being a person who is licensed by the Bishop to assist in teaching classes, reading lessons, etc. It was in this capacity that I first became acquainted with the great Dr. Henry Lubeck, rector of that church and one of the finest preachers of his time. He numbered among his parishioners many of the Roosevelts, the Beekmans, and the Rupertis, and he taught me a great deal about human relations that I could never learn at school. During my last year at the Seminary, I acted as a sort of secretary to him, discovering the many ways in which an assistant can help a busy rector. I grew to love Dr. Lubeck deeply, and I like to think he felt the same way toward me, for he always referred to me as his adopted son.

Another church at which I assisted was the beautiful old Church of the Heavenly Rest, then located at Forty-fifth Street and Fifth Avenue. The rector there was Dr. Herbert Shipman, later Suffragan Bishop of the New York diocese. He had been chaplain at West

Point, and there had met and married his beautiful wife, who loved the theater almost as much as I did. That gave us a great deal in common, and I remember both Shipmans with the utmost delight.

When I became a senior, one of my tasks at Heavenly Rest was to help two vestrymen count the offering at the end of the service, a chore that took a great of time. I remember I was profoundly shocked one Sunday when the sexton passed by while we were counting this money, and one of the vestrymen, a prominent parishioner, looked after him and exclaimed, "How I hate that man!" There was loathing in his voice. Now the sexton, of course, is also the verger or undertaker in most Episcopal churches, and this particular sexton was a rather pompous old man. He had once been a butler and seemed to enjoy the trappings of his lugubrious office. He wore a long black gown, his jet-black whiskers trailing down on either side, and when leading a cortège, he proudly carried a long funeral staff. He looked like something out of the Dark Ages. Still, I saw no reason to hate him, and promptly asked why. "Because," the vestryman explained, "every time he looks at me, I know he is measuring me out for my coffin!" And he was so serious about it that it was all I could do not to burst into laughter!

To be sure, this old sexton was not a popular man, but that was largely because of his exorbitant bills. He used to justify these with Machiavellian logic. "Look at this backlog of accounts!" he would moan. "We have families here that haven't paid for the last two or three members we have buried. Some go back for the last ten years! Poor people always pay, but rich people never pay until they absolutely have to. That's why I charge so much—I have to consider the interest!" (Again, you see, I was learning things that are never taught at the Seminary.)

But perhaps the strangest of my Sunday assignments was my work in Hell's Kitchen. We had at that time a very wonderful woman, Miss Aileen Benjamin, who for years ran a sort of mission Sunday school in New York's toughest section. It was my job in the afternoon, when I had finished uptown, to go down there and

help bring the Word to some of the unholiest little terrors who ever managed to look well scrubbed behind the ears for one hour on Sunday. Still, I thoroughly enjoyed it. Though the boys were rough and ready, they were in no way vicious, and it is interesting to note that there was none of the flagrant juvenile delinquency which is so widespread today even among the "better classes." These boys were mischievous, and sometimes unruly, but they had a basic sense of decency, and quickly responded to kind and intelligent treatment. Not always so today!

I had wonderful friends in New York. One of the closest of these was Byrd Douglas Wise, a cousin of mine and a fraternity brother at Columbia. Byrd was the youngest son of John S. Wise, a prominent lawyer and author of *The End of an Era.* His grandfather had been that Governor Henry A. Wise of Virginia who had "hanged John Brown to a sour apple tree"; and his mother, who had been one of the beauties of Nashville, was still a handsome and accomplished woman. These people were a delight to be with, witty and well-informed, and I took hearty advantage of the welcome always accorded me at their home.

I knew Byrd Wise had recently become engaged to a very pretty young girl named Edith Granden, but I had not as yet met her. One Sunday, however, I ran into her at church and she introduced herself. In the course of the conversation, it developed that she was enthusiastic about the new card rage, "bridge whist," and she asked if I played. I hardly knew one card from another, but I was sure that if I could master Hebrew, I could learn to juggle a few cards around. So I accepted her invitation to a bridge party at her house, then went back to the dormitory to "bone up" on the game.

A lot of good it did me. The first thing I beheld, on entering Edith Granden's house, was a lovely young stranger who drove every other thought right out of my mind. She was slender and tall, with the oval face of a youthful madonna, and with rich dark hair drawn back softly at the nape of her neck. She was beautifully dressed, but in that casual way some women seem to have with

their clothes. I was simply bowled over, and as soon as we were introduced—her name was Mary Elmendorf Watson—I made sure that we would be partners at bridge.

Poor girl! I was too excited to know aces from trumps, and our opponents happily led us to slaughter. I didn't care. All I was interested in was how I was ever going to see this lovely creature again; and so, before we parted, I got up the courage to ask her if she and Edith Granden would come to the Seminary some afternoon and be my guests at tea.

She accepted. This was already a big point in my favor, as it turned out, for tea at the Seminary was no treat to Mollie Watson. She had played around the Seminary as a child, the way I had played around my father's plantation—for who was she, I learned, but the granddaughter of old Dean Hoffman, who had been head of the school for twenty-five years!

Dean Hoffman was a legend to all of us students. He had been the Very Rev. Eugene Augustus Hoffman, the planner and benefactor of General Theological during the period of its great expansion, from 1876 to 1902. Hoffman Hall, the refectory in which we took our meals, had been built by him and named in his honor. He was known in his lifetime as the "richest clergyman in the United States," having inherited a fortune in real-estate holdings from his old Dutch ancestor, Martinus Hoffman, who settled in Nieuw Amsterdam in 1640. Through these early connections, he was related to the Van Cortlandts, the Livingstons, the Schuylers and Beekmans, and half the old gentry of New York.

When the Dean had taken charge of the Seminary in 1876, he had found it a backward and undeveloped school. He immediately revised the board of trustees, enlisting the support of such influential men as Cornelius Vanderbilt, the Pierponts, Elbridge T. Gerry, and Dr. Morgan Dix of Trinity Church. Together, they laid out plans for expansion, and in less than a decade a whole series of imposing buildings had been transposed from drawing-board to stone, surrounding and enclosing the quadrangle green. It was a giant accomplishment.

Drawing heavily upon his own fortune, the Dean built the Chapel of the Good Shepherd as a memorial to his parents. He also established the Seminary library, famous the world over for its ancient documents and early engravings. With Cornelius Vanderbilt, he amassed the finest collection of Latin Bibles in existence, crowning it with the gift of a Gutenberg Bible. His gifts to the library continued throughout his lifetime, and when he died he left a large endowment to carry on the work.

This, then, was the background of the girl I had fallen in love with at sight, and whom I had so gallantly invited to tea at her grandfather's school! She came, with Edith Granden, and I proceeded to lay on the Southern charm as heavily as I dared. She was intelligent and gracious, and I was delighted to find she had a rare sense of humor—she laughed even at me. But at least when I asked her when I would see her again, she told me her parents kept open house on Sunday afternoons, and I was welcome to call. I now had another "assignment" to add to my Sundays.

When I am alone these days at the rectory, and the winter twilight closes in early, I like to sit for a while before I put on the lights and recall some of the faces from those Seminary days. There was gentle Miss Robins who kept house for her brother, Dean Wilford Leach Robins. They lived in the spacious old deanery built by Dean Hoffman, and still furnished with the comfortable possessions he had installed. They often had the students in for tea, and Miss Robins went about pressing upon us huge stacks of the most utterly delicious cookies and cake.

Then there was John Charles Roper, the Englishman who later became Bishop, then Archbishop, of Ottawa. He was our teacher of theology, and one of the most deeply religious men I have ever known, but he was much too sensitive to other people's rights ever to force the slightest dogma upon them. When he made a suggestion, he did it with extreme sweetness and gentleness. There was one of his recommendations which I have never forgotten. In connection with the spiritual life, he said, "Have a center, and make that center strong." To him, the center was Holy Communion. To

others, it might be prayer. To me personally, it is the constant awareness that there is Divinity in every man and woman I meet. But what Dr. Roper meant was that each person should choose some symbol, concept, or teaching of his religion which especially appealed to him and afforded him comfort, as the very heart and core of his spiritual life, *and make that center strong.* I believe that such a center is extremely important to those of us today who live under the shadow of the hydrogen bomb and other uncertainties, for it gives us an axis of strength about which the inner life can revolve. It is difficult for anyone to assess how much he owes to others, and exactly where he garnered up the philosophy he likes to think is his own, but I know I owe much to this soft-spoken man who was so reluctant to force his opinions on others. To stimulate rather than impose—that is the mark of the truly gifted teacher.

Then, my fellow students. There was George "Jack" Christian from Richmond, Virginia, who loved French ice cream so much that he used to repair almost every afternoon to a place on lower Fifth Avenue and indulge in an orgy of it, frequently abetted by myself and other accomplices. His son is now my godson. And Henry Shires, today Bishop of San Francisco. And William Leopold Essex, the first of my roommates at Edson Hall, now Bishop of Springfield, Illinois. And Robert Elliott Marshall, of whom we all were so fond, and whose career was cut short by early death. And Brayton Byron, who had been an actor before he came to Orders, and whose stage experience was eagerly exploited by us at our Christmas charades. And Edwin H. Van Etten, who went to Calvary Church in Pittsburgh, and now for many years has been Dean of the Cathedral in Boston. And Edward Luke Reid, now retired after long and faithful service. And Guy Emory Shipler, for years editor of *The Churchman,* who used to regale everyone with the story of how I served eggnogg in my rooms at Christmas and got all the students tipsy—a gross exaggeration. And Wallace John Gardiner, Bishop of New Jersey, who died but a short while ago.

These were not merely schoolmates. Most of them have been friends of a lifetime, comrades whose careers I have followed with

pride and encouragement these last forty years, and who have done credit to the sacred office we chose. Yet so dispersed have we become, that when Wallace Gardiner and myself attended the twenty-fifth anniversary of our class, we decided never to go to another reunion. It is too disappointing. Better by far to keep one's memories—for in retrospect no one ever is wrinkled or gray.

CHAPTER III

My Ordination As Deacon—First Sermon—Mississippi Diplomacy—First Baptism—Studio Parties at Hotel Grenoble—Fred and Adèle Astaire—Funeral Fees and Tips—An Irish Wake—Dr. Lubeck of Zion and St. Timothy—I Am Ordained.

THE ELEVENTH of June is St. Barnabas' Day, a date I associate with many important events in my life. On that day I was born; on that day I first determined to enter the ministry; and on that day I was ordained a deacon.

After three years of training, those of us who had passed our final tests and examinations were to be presented at the Cathedral of St. John the Divine, to take our vows and be ordained.

My sponsor for the occasion—for all such candidates must have a "presenter"—was my beloved Dr. Lubeck of Zion and St. Timothy. When my turn came, he led me forward to the altar, dressed for the first time in my long black cassock, with the surplice falling over it in immaculate folds, and with the stole, or symbol of authority, hung over my shoulder. I heard him say to Bishop Greer, who then was head of the New York diocese: "Reverend Father in God, I present unto you this person present, to be admitted to the Diaconate." (The Diaconate is, of course, the first of the three orders in the Episcopal ministry—deacons, priests, and bishops.)

Then, as I stood with bowed head, I heard Bishop Greer answer gravely: "Take heed that the persons whom ye present unto us be apt and meet for their learning and godly conversation, to exercise their Ministry duly, to the honor of God, and the edifying of his Church." There were more questions and responses as set down in the Book of Common Prayer for this momentous occasion, and at last the Bishop spoke to me.

"Do you trust," he asked, "that you are inwardly moved by the Holy Ghost to take upon you this Office and Ministration, to serve God for the promoting of his glory, and the edifying of his people?" And so on, through the prescribed ritual, until he came to the final question: "Will you reverently obey your Bishop, and other chief Ministers, who, according to the Canons of the Church, may have charge and government over you; following with glad mind and will their godly admonitions?"

I solemnly replied: "I will endeavor to do so, the Lord being my helper."

Bishop Greer laid his hand upon my head. "Take thou Authority," he said, "to execute the Office of a Deacon in the Church of God, and to preach the same, if thou be thereto licensed by the Bishop himself."

The ceremony was concluded by the reading of the gospel, prayers, and the administration of Holy Communion. I was ordained.

It would be another year, of course, before I would be eligible for ordination as a priest; but meantime, as deacon, I was commissioned to preach, to baptize, to assist at the service of Holy Communion, and to read morning and evening prayers. Dr. Lubeck at once appointed me junior curate at Zion and St. Timothy, where I had already worked so long.

I preached my first sermon at St. Cyprian's Church in lower Manhattan, at the evening service. This is a Negro church named in honor of the first African saint, and its rector, the Rev. John Wesley Johnson, had been a good friend to me since the days when I had taught many of his Sunday-school children at the Little

Church Around the Corner. I remember little of this first sermon except that I kept repeating the phrase, *Do your duty when it is due.* I was fascinated by the alliteration of this, and kept dragging it in over and over. It's probably just as well that a merciful Providence has dropped a curtain on the rest.

It was summer, and my good Dr. Lubeck packed me off on vacation. There was a slow boat to New Orleans, advertised as "Sixty-eight Hours of Perfect Life at Sea," which sounded just what I needed. It was a lazy, commodious, old-fashioned tub that poked her way down the coast, through the Florida Keys, and finally around the Gulf to New Orleans. I lay on deck and soaked up the sunshine, toasting my clerical pallor into a bootstrap tan. By the time I arrived home, having also stopped off for a couple of days in New Orleans, I looked as though I had never done a day's work in my life. Father looked at me suspiciously, but finally grunted with approval when he saw my turned-around collar.

Although I was officially home for a rest, I soon found occasion to make myself useful. I called on my old friend, Dr. Halsey Werline of Jackson, and on Bishop Bratton, and found both were deeply concerned about a little church that had just been established at Ridgeland, a few miles from my home.

This church had been started by a group of newcomers, mostly from Ohio and the Middle West, who had been attracted to Mississippi by the low cost of land. But Ridgeland was a touchy community in regard to Northerners, for one thing because some of its own leading citizens had been secretly suspected of dealing with carpetbaggers after the war, and for another thing, because some missionaries had just opened a school for Negroes at Tougaloo, very close by. The old families in town, all closely intermarried, refused to attend services at the newly opened church, even though the next nearest Episcopal church was ten miles away.

"This is something you can do while you're home," said Bishop Bratton. "These people all know you, and know you're a Southerner. Maybe you can do something to break down the deadlock."

Well, I first went to Canton to see the rector who had been riding

over to Ridgeland to hold services two or three times a month, and asked him if he minded if I took a hand. He was only too delighted. I began to preach services, but also to make a round of afternoon calls. Never once, of course, did I ask anyone to come to church—I merely made friends. I sat on porches, or in shaded parlors, fanning myself and drinking endless draughts of lemonade and iced tea. After a while one or two stray lambs showed up rather self-consciously at Sunday service, and I greeted them heartily, but without surprise. Before my vacation was over, they were all attending service at the boycotted church, and the issue involved had never been mentioned. In short, it is often the same with the doctor of divinity as with the doctor of medicine—it is sometimes better, for the sake of the patient, to effect a cure without appearing to have noticed the disease.

I also, that summer, performed my first baptism. Dr. Walter Lewis, a good Presbyterian I'd known all my life, and his wife, a good Episcopalian, asked me if I'd baptize their young son, Hugh. Since there was no Episcopal church in Madison, we held the ceremony at their home, with just the family present. For a baptismal font, I used a silver serving bowl from the sideboard, and the water was drawn from the kitchen tap. But Hugh grew up to be just as fine a specimen as though he had been baptized with all the proper accouterments.

After a pleasant summer, I returned to New York. I took a small room at a hotel to be near the church, but soon I received a letter from my cousin, Laura Britton, telling me that her son, Louis Nicholson Britton, was coming up to New York to study at the Art Students' League. Would I look after him? I was very happy to have someone to live with, and so when Louis arrived, we took a studio apartment at the old Hotel Grenoble on West Fifty-sixth Street. This was an establishment that had seen better days, having once boasted among its residents Richard Harding Davis and other celebrities, but it was still very *gemütlich* and comfortable, and inexpensive enough to fit the budget of a first-year art student and a struggling curate. Now we could entertain, not only my friends,

but a swarm of illustrators and ambitious young artists who overflowed from the Art Students' League.

One thing I insisted on at our parties, and that was "no beer." This was prudence on my part rather than conviction. I had never been a teetotaler, and took a cocktail or highball when they were being passed around, but I wanted no wild rumors that I was encouraging bohemian parties at the studio. Of course the boys smuggled a little beer into the kitchen, and I was well aware of frequent trips to examine the icebox, but as long as things remained well in hand, I paid no attention.

While living in this studio at the old Hotel Grenoble, I used to saunter across Fifty-seventh Street on my way to the church, and frequently I paused to watch the children at play. Preposterous as it sounds, boys used to play ball, in those days, right out in the middle of wide Fifty-seventh Street! One of the youngsters was a boy named Fred, a nimble player who caught my attention because after making a hit, he would break into a small private war dance by way of celebration. I had been around the theater enough to know a tap routine when I saw one, and this was professional. I spoke to the boy, and he told me with a big friendly grin that he *was* professional—he and his sister Adèle toured in vaudeville in winter, but in summer they lived with their mother at a nearby hotel. They didn't go to school because they had a private tutor.

The hotel where they lived lay within my parish, so in the course of my calls I looked up the mother. She was a Mrs. Austerlitz from Omaha, Nebraska, who because of the children's careers, had changed her name to Astaire. She was a very handsome woman who had once been on the stage herself, and she was fully aware that her children were exceptionally talented. Adèle was a tomboy offstage, much more boisterous than her brother Fred, but she had a way of turning, on cue, into the sheerest thistledown. It's a pity she gave up dancing when she married—I've heard many experts lament that one of the greatest was lost to the stage.

Mrs. Astaire told me Fred would like to be confirmed before he started on tour that fall, and they would be grateful if I could help to

that end. And so it worked out that the first person from the theater whom I ever presented for confirmation was a long-legged dancer named Fred Astaire. I took him, naturally, down to the Little Church Around the Corner, the actors' church. It was the beginning of a lifelong friendship that has brought me much joy. For years I followed Fred's fortunes with hope and anxiety, for when Adèle married a son of the Duke of Devonshire and gave up the stage, everyone said that would be the end of Fred's career too. But he went on alone, proving them all wrong.

Fred was here the other day, sitting with me in this study. He had come to New York for the opening of a new picture, and dropped in for a visit. We spent several hours together. He had lost his beloved wife some time ago and was finding it very hard to get used to her death.

I don't know how much early religious training may have to do with it, but Fred Astaire is one of those lucky people who have been able to weather fame and success without losing his sense of balance or proportion. He has had everything there is—money, glamour, and many years of stardom—yet he has remained an unspoiled human being, decent, unassuming, and with a fine regard for other people. He is, in point of time, my "youngest" communicant—which makes him also my oldest—and when I see him grinning down from that forty-foot screen—I just can't help it, I feel a big thrill of pride, for "That's my boy!"

Now, although I had been living in the North for several years, I soon began to find out that there were a few Yankee customs in regard to my work which I had never heard of. The first rude awakening came one morning when I opened a letter addressed to me and found enclosed a rather large check. It came from the sister of a man for whom I had conducted a funeral service a couple of days before, and the note recommended tactfully that I used the money "in any way I saw fit." Well, I saw fit to be very much offended! Did this woman think that I, a clergyman, was to be *paid* for doing what was merely my duty? I was just about to put the

check in another envelope and send it back, when Dr. Lubeck walked in. He listened to my outburst of indignation, then put a parental hand on my shoulder. For one thing, he told me, I must never, *never* return a check under such circumstances—it was an affront to the giver, and would seem to question the lady's knowledge of what was proper and right. And for another thing, the woman was merely following accepted practice. While no stipulated fee was charged for conducting a funeral service at a home, it was usual for the family to send the clergyman a donation. It was one of his "perquisites."

In the South we had never heard of such a thing. Weddings, funerals, baptisms and so on were all part of any clergyman's chores, and we didn't offer, and he didn't expect, any sort of honorarium. But when in Rome— I pocketed the fee with a pretty thank-you note to the sender, and told my conscience it was way behind the times. I've noticed that it always seems easy to get used to new customs when money is involved, and soon I had made an almost perfect adjustment. Almost, but not quite.

I had just finished the funeral rites for a lady who had died, and was about to get into a carriage to go to the cemetery with the rest of the mourners, when the brother of the deceased stepped up before me. "Here," he said, thrusting something into my hands, "buy yourself some cigars." It was a five-dollar bill!

Perhaps it was the crudeness of the gesture that got under my skin—it certainly did lack something of finesse. At any rate, I jumped as though he had put a snake into my hands and pushed it right back at him. "Sorry," I said, "but I don't smoke cigars!" I had the satisfaction of seeing his face turn as red as mine felt, and then I marched to the carriage with my back like a ramrod. There was one "gentleman" I'd put in his place!

Then I had the long ride to the cemetery to think the thing over. What a pitiful triumph! Here I was a deacon, sworn to conduct myself so that I might be fit to become a priest in a year, and I couldn't take bad manners from a man without wanting to fling them back in his face! Furthermore, he had some excuse—he had

just lost his sister and might be so bewildered by grief that he didn't quite realize what he was doing. There was no excuse for me, etc., etc. By the time I got to the cemetery I was utterly deflated and would have apologized on the spot had opportunity offered. As it was, I wrote a note when I got back to the rectory and made the *amende honorable*. But too little, and too late! The man never forgave me—he preferred to think, I learned later, that I had returned the five dollars because I expected more. And so I had to find out the hard way, what Dr. Lubeck had told me from ripened experience—never return a gift, unless you want to invoke the ill-will of the giver.

Funerals were a good test, in fact, of a young man's resourcefulness, for you never knew just what kind of environment you would be thrown into next. On one occasion I answered a call to a house on West Fifty-seventh Street, only to be confronted by a rather familiar-looking man with pince-nez glasses dangling from a ribbon, a glittering smile, and an authoritative way of tossing his head. It was Theodore Roosevelt, just arrived from the White House. He was chief mourner—it was his aunt who had died.

From there I went to the home of one of our poorest parishioners, in a side-street tenement. This was an Irish lady who had just passed away, and though the family was Episcopalian, not Catholic, it kept the tradition of the old Celtic wake. I never saw such merry mourners! For two days before the funeral, I was asked to come and say prayers with the family, and every time a newcomer arrived, he was hailed by keening and uplifted glasses. I slipped away when my functions were over, but I knew this faithful "watch" was being kept all night, and I was rather relieved for the survivors when the third day arrived. Still, I must say if all Irish funerals are as happy as this one, there is much to be said for the old-fashioned wake. Or perhaps it was because the old woman herself had made her death a thing of rejoicing. She was a true daughter of Erin who had always claimed to have "second sight," as she called it, and just before she died something quite extraordinary had happened. She opened her eyes and seemed to look right beyond us,

with an ineffable light of joy on her face. "I see into the Heavens!" she cried. "I see my husband. I see all of my family who have died before. And now Glory, Glory Hallelujah, I'm going straight to my Lord!"

She fell back dead, and I folded her wrinkled old hands across her breast. No, it wasn't delirium; she was quite in her right mind. She was a hard-working woman, and her faith was very simple. When I read from the Prayer Book: *I am the resurrection and the life, saith the Lord: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live,* she did not accept these as just beautiful words meant to solace the dying, but as a literal promise about to be fulfilled. As a result, she went to her death with the eagerness and anticipation of any young girl rushing forth to a party. I have seen many deaths, as all clergymen must, in the last forty years, but none I so like to remember as hers. She thought I sustained her in the moment of her passing, but she has sustained me more than she could ever have imagined, throughout a long life.

It was a dying waiter who finally settled for me the matter of fees. One of my duties was to call at Roosevelt Hospital, which lay within our parish, and visit the sick. I learned an old man had been brought to one of the wards, and so I went and sat by his bedside to see what I could do for him. He wanted a listener more than anything else, and so I nodded sympathetically as he told me of a lonely life, of years of monotonous labor with very little saved, and the trials and tribulations of a waiter's existence. His chief grievance was tips. He felt well-to-do people were very poor tippers. "But then," he said finally, "I suppose you find it the same in your work, Father—rich people never tip you as much as they should."

Tips, in my work! The word startled me so much that I had to hide my confusion. I told the waiter I was not a Father, only a curate; but all the while, I was saying to myself, Yes, that's the word for it. He has put his finger exactly on what has been troubling me so—these "perquisites" I receive are nothing but tips!

I arranged for the waiter to be taken over to Welfare Island where he could receive the long-term nursing he needed. Then I went

back to the church with a new resolution. I would turn over all future fees, for funerals, weddings, and the like, to the poor fund of the parish wherever I served. I have done so ever since, beginning at Zion and St. Timothy in 1913 and continuing on to today. For this I claim no special credit, for I know there are many clergymen who do so. And I must also add that I imply no criticism of those who do not, for I well know that in countless cases the clergyman's pay is so low that he could hardly feed his family were he not helped out by this supplementary income. I dare say many ministers would dearly love the luxury of not accepting fees, but there are places in the United States where the preacher still receives eggs and firewood as part of his pay.

Churchgoing in those days, especially among the more fashionable congregations, was a good deal more formal than it is today. A shiny top hat and well-fitting Prince Albert distinguished the pillar of the church of a Sabbath morn, and naturally his lady matched this elegance with Merry Widow hat, lace *fichu*, and plumes. Promenading to church was a sort of weekly edition of the Easter Parade, and once there, great importance was attached to dignity and silence. At some churches, traffic was forbidden during the hour of Sunday service, and it had not been too long ago that Transfiguration downtown had stretched chains across the street after the last carriage had deposited its pew-holders at the curb! The chains were not withdrawn till the last note of the Recessional, and anyone who wished to go clattering about town in the meantime could choose another route.

Yet gradually, as the twentieth century approached its second decade, a new and more democratic spirit began to be evidenced, especially among the young men just out of the seminaries. It was felt that the pastor should welcome people a little more warmly on a personal basis, and greet them with a handshake before they left the church. Dr. Lubeck, though the kindliest man in the world by nature, was an Englishman born and given to the English shyness and reserve. It was too late, he admitted, for him to change his ways now, but I could try it if I liked.

The innovation made a great hit. Most people welcomed the chance to be friendlier, and those who were strangers in the city were apt to return. But it had one drawback, so far as I was concerned. I hadn't counted on the vast numbers of people I would be called on to recognize almost at sight, and all of my life I've had a wretched memory for names.

Finally one very stout lady took pity on my obvious embarrassment and said to me cheerfully, "Now, Dr. Ray, don't you worry, I'll tell you exactly how you can remember my name without even trying. My name is Graham, just like Graham cereal. So you just think of something you like for breakfast, and it'll just pop out. It's all in association."

Wonderful!—except that I have never cared for cereal in the morning. The next Sunday when the large lady came toward me, I boomed out heartily, "Ah, good morning, Miss Bacon." She froze in her tracks, and if looks could have killed . . . I mumbled a hasty apology, trying to pass it all off as an awkward little joke, but I don't think I fooled her. That cured me for life of memory systems by association. If you have a lively imagination, it's too great a risk.

I was now counting the weeks to Trinity Sunday, the day when I would be ordained as a priest. But in late spring I, who was almost never ill, began to be troubled by constant sore throats. I went to a doctor who peered down inside me with mirrors and lights and said my tonsils were infected. The operation was "nothing," he assured me—hundreds of children have their tonsils snatched out every day, and the next day, practically, are playing tag. I soon found out that this may apply to children, but tonsils like mine, full-grown and protesting, are not so easily evicted. The recovery was a thing of exquisite pain. I lay on a bed at St. Luke's, unable to eat, unable to speak, unable to swallow, and fumed because it looked as though I would be unable to stand on Trinity Sunday. My consoler was the faithful Miss Benjamin, who deserted her post in Hell's Kitchen long enough to come feed me slippery spoonfuls of calf's-foot jelly.

Nevertheless, I was there at St. John the Divine when the great day came, all vested and ready, and by far the most spiritual-looking candidate present. I had a fine ascetic appearance, which was much less due to a state of inner grace than to the fact that I was half-dead of starvation. Again Dr. Lubeck presented me for Orders, and Bishop Greer presided.

The ceremony for ordination to the priesthood is similar to that for the diaconate, except that it confers further powers. Among these is the serving of Holy Communion, the hearing of confession, and the remission of sins. *Whose sins thou dost forgive, they are forgiven; and whose sins thou dost retain, they are retained.*

At the conclusion of the ceremony, it was customary for some rectors to kneel before the newly ordained priest and claim his first blessing. The man who knelt before me was Father Rich of Corpus Christi, a little chapel on West Sixty-ninth Street that had been established by the Church of the Transfiguration. Thus again, and even at the moment of my ordination, there was indirect contact with the Little Church Around the Corner, and this I chose to accept as a promising omen.

Only six years before, I had come to New York with the hope of becoming a doctor. And here I was at last—a doctor of souls!

CHAPTER IV

My Courtship of Mollie—She Leaves for Honolulu—I Meet a Lady from Bryan, Texas—Evangeline Adams—A Letter from Bishop Kinsolving—Miss Adams Makes a Prediction.

SUNDAY AFTERNOON was when I carried on my "courtship" of Mollie. I put the word in quotes, for surely no one but myself—and perhaps Mollie, privately—could have guessed what I was up to. Such manners, such formality! The Watson household was run on strict Edwardian lines, and what puzzles me, rather, is not that it took us twelve years to get married, but that we ever accomplished it at all!

They lived on West Seventy-sixth Street, in one of those substantial old brownstones that have long since declined into furnished apartments. You mounted a flight of stone steps—for the basement floor, behind its wrought-iron grill, was sacred to the pantries and kitchens—and ringing the bell, you asked the butler who answered if Miss Mollie was at home, and would he announce you. He ushered you into the drawing room, a huge, double salon which, with the dining room, library, and Dr. Watson's den, occupied the first floor. There, if you were the earliest to arrive, you wandered about examining photographs, or sat down to peer at stereopticon pictures till your hostess put in her appearance.

I was always the first to get there, for I had discovered that in this way I could see Mollie alone for a short while before the rest of the visitors arrived. Also before my rival showed up. I had discovered, to my chagrin, that a former Belgian count, who had renounced his title to become an American citizen, was also interested in Mollie. He kissed her hand in the Continental fashion. He sent her roses. He spoke several languages fluently, and could converse with her in German and French. If this was not enough, he was also good-looking, and hit it off distressingly well with Mrs. Watson, that indomitable lady whom I had already chosen for *my* mother-in-law.

I, on the other hand, got along very well with Mollie's father, Dr. John Henry Watson. He had been rector of the Church of the Good Shepherd in Hartford but was now retired. He lived a quiet life, browsing by day among the books that filled his library shelves from baseboard to ceiling, and in the evening faring forth on such social adventures as Mrs. Watson had planned. He loved a good Havana, but never dared to light one in his own house, except in his den. This was a masculine hideaway at the back of the house, clubbily furnished with deep leather chairs, and to it the gentlemen always repaired after dinner for port and cigars.

I don't suppose I ever saw the full staff of servants. I did see the butler and parlor maid upstairs, and I knew there was a cook and kitchen maid somewhere below-stairs. In time I encountered old Sarah, Mrs. Watson's personal maid, and the chauffeur, Cornelius. There undoubtedly were others who came in part-time, such as the seamstress and laundress; but I was aware of at least six full-time servants—and just to show how times have changed, all these were required to wait on a family of three!

The chauffeur, Cornelius Flynn, was custodian of the long, black Rolls Royce which Mrs. Watson ordered from England every so-many years. It was always a special job, because it must be equipped with a Brewster body. Cornelius drove the Watsons for years, and later became my own chauffeur in New York. He was a good Roman

Catholic, who would drop me at my church while he went along to his own for mass.

The Watson house was furnished with cherished antiques, many of them handed down to Mrs. Watson from her father, Dean Hoffman. But Dr. Watson had a prized possession of his own. This was always referred to as the Winslow Chest, and was the same chest that Governor Winslow, one of Dr. Watson's forebears, had brought over on the *Mayflower*. It was supposed to have been the only piece of furniture, on that voyage of plain men, which bore a coat of arms. Today it reposes in the Boston Museum.

Whatever understanding Mollie and I had between us was entirely unspoken. I loved her dearly, but never managed to make that known. Our moments together were brief and circumspect, and always interrupted. Sometimes the Watsons included me on one of their evenings to the theater or the opera, and I was able to sit beside her. But in any event, it would have been impossible for me to marry her on the money I was then making, and in the position I held. It would be a long time, I knew, before I could honestly offer her so much as a home, so I merely had to trust that she would wait and understand—and trust too that she liked me better than the count, or any other candidates who might come along.

As I may have implied, Mrs. Watson was head of the family, at least as far as making plans was concerned. Her husband and daughter had long been used to accepting her sudden whims and decrees with helpless resignation, but I was new to the phenomenon. One evening we had all just returned from the theater when Mrs. Watson announced suddenly: "I've decided we're going to Honolulu next week. I'll make arrangements tomorrow."

I looked at Mollie, Mollie looked at me. Honolulu—separation! There was no object in their going, except to spend the winter in pleasant surroundings, and to visit with the Bishop of Honolulu, whom Mrs. Watson knew well. But there was no use in even trying to register a protest. I had made plans, small plans to be sure, but important to me, by which I had hoped to see Mollie a little more often and perhaps away from the house. Now she was off and away

at her mother's caprice, and heaven only knew when she might be coming back. The day they departed, I stood waving the ship out of sight with a sinking heart, trying to tell myself that the time would soon pass, and they couldn't stay away forever. Certainly I never dreamed they would be gone for two whole years!

My cousin and I had given up the Grenoble studio after a year, and I had taken a tiny apartment next door to the church. This enabled me to be available at a moment's notice whenever I was needed, and also brought me closer to the West Side YMCA, where I was spending quite a bit of time training young men who wished to become ushers or active laymen in the church.

I was riding across town in a streetcar one Saturday afternoon when a lady, who was accompanied by a little girl, noticed my clerical collar and asked me if I were an Episcopal clergyman. I told her yes, and she then asked me where, in that neighborhood, she and her little daughter might attend early service next morning. They were up here on a visit from Texas, she told me, and were staying at a nearby hotel.

I replied that I was a curate from Zion and St. Timothy, and would be delighted to see them at service next morning. The lady then introduced herself as Mrs. Tyler Haswell of Bryan, Texas, and said she was a sister-in-law of Percy Haswell, the actress. I was well acquainted with Percy Haswell, a very popular actress, and was to know her even better in later years when she helped to found the Episcopal Actors' Guild. Mrs. Haswell also told me that her husband was a warden of St. Andrew's Church down in Bryan, Texas.

I had never heard of St. Andrew's Church, let alone of Bryan, Texas, but I nodded politely and renewed my invitation for service next morning. Next morning I looked about for them, and was a little disappointed when they failed to appear. I'll tell you presently how I met them again—under circumstances so remote that I have often wondered since if there is such a thing as a "chance" encounter.

During that final year at Zion and St. Timothy, I met some most

unusual, but quite fascinating, people. One was Annie Besant and another was Evangeline Adams, the astrologer. I first made the latter's acquaintance when my friend, Judge MacAdoo, told me he wanted me to meet a remarkable woman, and took me up to Miss Adams' studio at Carnegie Hall. Remarkable she was, in more ways than one. She had nothing, in appearance, of the psychic about her or the dabbler in mysteries. She had come from the Adams family of Boston, and her manner was friendly, assured, and a little bit brisk. J. Pierpont Morgan the elder was one of her regular clients, and she kept him constantly advised of planetary aspects that, in her consideration, might affect the market. Later clients were John Burroughs the naturalist, Edward VIII, now Duke of Windsor, Enrico Caruso, and Geraldine Farrar.

I liked Miss Adams immensely, as a person. She was intelligent enough to observe that most of the people who turned to her to have their horoscopes read were people in trouble. They were either faced with a decision, or were deeply dissatisfied with the direction of their lives. Interlarded with her zodiacal reports, such as "Mars is transiting Jupiter," there was always excellent moral and worldly advice. Yet I knew of a few occasions when Evangeline Adams' prognostications came true with disconcerting accuracy, and one of these predictions had to do with myself.

Some friends of mine, who were planning a trip to Egypt and the Holy Land, had been good enough to ask me along as their guest, and I was naturally excited at the prospect. Dr. Lubeck heartily approved the journey, and had promised me leave of absence from Zion and St. Timothy. Everything seemed all set to go, when I happened to drop in one afternoon at Evangeline Adams' studio, and told her gaily that I was soon off for Palestine. She gave me a long look out of those sharp eyes of hers, then went to her desk where she began to scribble some figures on a chart.

"I'm sorry," she said finally, looking up at me, "but I'm afraid you're not going to make that trip. A journey seems indicated, but you're going to the South. There is illness at home—your father, I think—and you will get a sudden call there in the very near future.

The death will not occur for some time yet, but I see you transferring your work to the South."

She seemed so certain of all this that I just sat and stared at her. "But," I protested, "the thought of working in the South has never occurred to me! Outside of my family, all my associations and interests are now in New York. It is perfectly unthinkable!" I did not argue about my father's illness, for he was a very old man and his health, I knew, had been on the decline. Still, I had had no warning of anything serious.

Seeing that her prediction had unsettled me somewhat, Miss Adams made some further calculations to see if she could not cheer me up. Finally she smiled. "You will return to New York in about nine years," she assured me. "I am certain of that. And your return will be a great event in your life—the fulfillment of some long-term ambition." She looked at me with amusement. "This particular sign," she added, "is usually associated with the dramatic arts. You're not harboring a secret ambition to be an actor?"

No, I told her, I didn't want to be an actor. But—the dramatic arts! The Little Church Around the Corner had long been known as "the actors' church." Could there be a connection?

Feeling a little foolish, for I still thought I ought to shrug the whole thing off, I asked her if she had any way of pinning this return down to any given institution. If she knew, for example, when a certain church was founded, would that be of any help? She said it would, if the information was correct, and so I gave her the date of the founding of Transfiguration. She checked with some more charts and did some more figuring. At last she threw down her pencil. "It checks!" she reported. "In nine years' time, the planets in these two charts coincide. This is definitely the church you are coming back to. Do you mind telling me, for the sake of the record, what church it is?"

"The Little Church Around the Corner," I told her weakly, and got up to go. My head was spinning. I had walked in there with every intention of starting out soon on a long trip to Palestine—and so far as I knew, that intention still held. But the Little Church

Around the Corner, in nine years' time! Was the thought even possible? I walked in on Dr. Lubeck, still in a daze, and told him of the prediction Evangeline Adams had just made. He shook his head like a sensible man, and patted me on the shoulder. "Cheer up, my boy," he said, "the chances are a hundred to one that things will go right along as you planned them. Now, you just get ready to go on that trip."

So I continued my preparations to leave for the Holy Land. One week later a telegram arrived from my mother. Father had just suffered a stroke and was not expected to live. I must come home at once.

I can't tell you whether or not I was even surprised. I suppose *shocked* was more like it. All of a sudden things seemed to happen all around me, and to me, without my volition. I went down home as fast as I could travel. Father was still alive, but the doctors said he could not recover, and would doubtless linger for a time as he was. I had to begin to think of the future. How could I care for my mother and sister when my father was gone? I had to provide them a home and a living.

Right in the midst of all this, a letter arrived from Bishop Kinsolving of Texas, offering me a church in his diocese! I had known "Texas George" since my second year in the seminary. His son Ovid, who was also a member of Beta Theta Pi, had been my roommate during my last two years at Edson Hall. He was a studious boy, expert in Greek, Latin, Hebrew, and well-read in the classics.

The Kinsolvings were a famous ecclesiastical family—all Kinsolvings sooner or later became bishops. Texas George, however, was the largest of them all, and a man of intellectual stature as well. When he came to New York, he spent a good deal of his time at a hotel on Park Avenue, and he would have Ovid and me come around to lunch. He was a very impressive sight with his gray hair, his great height, and his turned-around collar. He took delight in sitting in the lobby after lunch, chewing tobacco, and with dead-eye

precision hitting the cuspidor every time. How those Yankees would stare! No matter how far away the target was, he never missed.

What Bishop Kinsolving was offering me was a parish in the heart of the Brazos Valley, the great cotton-growing section of Texas. I would act as chaplain for the Agricultural and Mechanical College of Texas, a magnificent school with hundreds of students and an outstanding faculty. I would also be rector of a little church in Bryan, St. Andrew's by name. This latter sounded vaguely familiar, but I didn't know why. What the offer meant to me, mainly, was that I would be nearer my family when the hour of need arrived, and would be in a better position to come to their help.

I returned to New York, and with a heavy heart said good-by to my friends. Mollie was still in Honolulu, so it meant no further separation so far as we two were concerned. But Dr. Lubeck, Miss Benjamin, my co-workers and colleagues—and my beloved Manhattan! It was a dreadful wrench to make my farewells, but at last I was on the train to Texas headed toward a new life and a parish of my own.

CHAPTER V

Bryan, Texas—I Meet an Old Friend—Texas A & M—I Shock the Baptist Minister—An Evangelist Preaches Against Me—Death of My Father—My Mother and Sister—The Wilson Doll—War Is Declared—New York Again and a Sudden Pain.

I HIT TEXAS right in the middle of the rainy season. Ordinarily the Brazos River is little more than a creek that meanders down through three quarters of Texas, but when the big rains come, it overflows its banks and spreads out like the Nile. This makes the bottomlands almost as rich as the valley of Egypt, and as a result, the Brazos planters grow some of the finest long-staple cotton to be found in the world.

On the day I arrived, there was nothing but drenching rain overhead and mud on the ground. I stepped off the train onto the platform at Bryan and gazed out at streets that were flooded with water. It was almost as cheerless a sight as that which greeted Noah on the fortieth day, and I couldn't help feeling that at least I was entitled to a dove to give me some sign of welcome. Then the dove appeared—a lady in an automobile, who came steering her way cautiously through the primordial ooze, and leaned out to call to me, "Are you Dr. Ray?"

Upon my allowing that I was, the lady hopped energetically out

of the car and before I could stop her, sloshed over to the platform to help me with my luggage. "I'm Mrs. ———" she started to say, when we caught our first good look at one another. We stared in disbelief.

"But you're not! You *can't* be!" she cried. Then with conviction, "But you are! You're the young man I met on the streetcar." Let scoffers beware of the long arm of coincidence—I had traveled halfway across the continent, burning all my bridges behind me, only to be greeted upon arrival by the lady I had met, with her daughter, in the Fifty-seventh Street trolley one year before! She was Ara Haswell, wife of Tyler Haswell, my new senior warden. No wonder the name of St. Andrew's in Bryan had sounded "vaguely familiar"!

I found St. Andrew's to be a beautiful church, only recently completed, and the rectory to be a nice little house located about a block and a half down the street. Ara Haswell helped me move in, and engaged an affable young colored boy named Clem to look after me and prepare my meals. To my delight, I began to eat like a king—what fluffy hot biscuits, succulent chicken and mouth-watering pecan pies that boy could put on the table! I was at the Haswells' one evening at dinner, eating a meal prepared by Ara's famous Addie, known as the best cook in that part of Texas, when I couldn't help bragging about my boy's prowess. This hot bread of Addie's was perfectly delicious, but I wasn't quite so sure that Clem couldn't top it. Then I glanced across the table and caught a smile on Ara Haswell's face. "Yes, Clem's a very smart boy," she conceded enigmatically—and finally I tumbled. Why, that wretched boy hadn't cooked for me at all! He had been playing up to Addie, who knew I loved her cooking, and raiding her kitchen every day to feed me. We all had a good laugh about it, but from then on I made Clem do his own cooking, even if I had to live on turnip greens.

The Agricultural and Mechanical College, the great A & M of Texas, was about five miles out of town, and I immediately took up my duties there as Episcopal chaplain. I also had the responsibility of running a little mission at Hearne, a nearby town named for one of the oldest Texas families. The mission was connected with St.

Andrew's, and every other Sunday I went there to preach, and once a month to hold Holy Communion.

Bryan at that time was a town of five or six thousand souls, most of them Baptist, for Texas is almost as solidly Baptist in religion as it is Democrat in politics. We Episcopalians were in the minority, as we are all over the South, though we had the allegiance of some of the more substantial citizens, including the planters.

From time to time, road companies would arrive from the East to present a drama or a musical comedy, and I would play host. I did this in the line of duty—a very pleasant duty—for before leaving New York, I had got myself appointed Texas chaplain for the Actors' Church Alliance. This was a national organization of Episcopal actors, at that time headed by George Arliss, with branches all over the nation. I, in person, was the "Texas branch." From my brief association with actors in New York, I knew how hard a road tour can be on a company, and how welcome some truly warm and impromptu hospitality; so I took my duties seriously, and as soon as the actors hiked over to the rectory after the performance, I showed them a time. Clem, with Addie's help, surpassed himself at laying out a buffet, and I always ordered in plenty of beer. Time meant nothing; we just went on talking, telling stories, and having a wonderful session until we were sleepy. And actors don't get sleepy early.

It was all innocent enough, but it got me into trouble. The Baptist minister expressed himself shocked at the "orgies" held at the Episcopal rectory—for you must realize that among Fundamental Baptists, playgoing is forbidden, and even moviegoing is considered a sin.

On top of that, as I entered the door of the post office one morning, I bumped into this same minister just going out. In spite of our differences, I hailed him with a pleasant good day; but he merely grunted a reply, then sniffed the air suspiciously and gave me a glare. My goose was cooked—I had just held eight-o'clock Communion and finished the wine!

Let me elucidate. The Book of Common Prayer directs that if

any consecrated wafers or wine are left over from Communion, these must be consumed by the minister or other communicants. They cannot be thrown away. I recall one time in New York, being practically choked to death at Communion by old Bishop Potter, because he had consecrated more wafers than were used, and stuffed a whole handful into my mouth. I remember chewing and swallowing, and swallowing and chewing, till the tears came to my eyes, and consequently I never tried to "unload" such a surplus on any of my communicants. The result was that I usually had small amounts left over that I had to drink or eat myself.

Of course, the amount of wine I had consumed was not very large—perhaps half a glass; but it was perceptible, no doubt, to the nose of a teetotaler at very close range. Before you could say "Carry Nation," word was all over Bryan that I had been in the post office that morning with liquor on my breath *and* before breakfast!

A clergyman, like a doctor, is expected not to sully his dignity by stooping to answer any sort of scandal. And what could I reply? Any Roman Catholic or fellow-Episcopalian would have understood why the celebrant of Communion might have wine on his breath, even before breakfast, but most of the Protestant denominations, even when they do celebrate Communion, do it with grape juice! So I waited, and was silent.

Next, one of those traveling evangelists invaded the town, and held a series of red-hot revival meetings at the Baptist church. I was flayed alive from his pulpit. But that was not the worst of it—such bold aspersions were cast on Episcopalians as such, that my junior warden, John Ashton, strode over to the church in the daytime and threatened to knock the block off the visiting preacher if he ever mentioned Dr. Ray or St. Andrew's again. That ended the campaign against the "sins of the Episcopalians," and I continued to welcome actors to my home.

I occupied the two-story rectory all by myself until early June, when my sister Alice sent word that Father was dying. I hastened home at once, and remained at his bedside until his death which,

like so many other critical occurrences in my life, fell on my birthday, St. Barnabas' Day.

After Father's funeral, we decided to rent the house and plantation, while Mother and Alice should come to Bryan to live with me. They both wore the heavy mourning still used in the South, whereas in Texas mourning was practically unheard of. Heads turned to stare curiously when I assisted two ladies in black from the train at the station, and drove them to the rectory; and my parishioners subsequently heard that I was living openly with a couple of nuns! As a matter of fact, my mother wore mourning for the rest of her life, though after the first year she changed to "light mourning," or a black bonnet with English crape veil. With this she invariably wore her "Lady Spotswood cross," which was set with diamonds and which she treasured as her life. It had been handed down to her through all the women of her family, from her great-great-grandmother, wife of the governor of Virginia, and she always cherished it as her greatest inheritance.

I loved the Texans, for they were warm and responsive and real individualists. Of course, sometimes this very individuality presented its problems. For example, across the street from St. Andrew's was an impressive home owned by Mrs. Chance, wife of one of the wealthiest of the Brazos planters. Mrs. Chance was very much a member of our parish, but she had had a falling-out with my predecessor and refused to come to services. However, she would sit on her porch on Sunday morning and sing hymns at the top of her voice, competing with our choir. This was a little hard on our organist, Mrs. Josephine Lawrence, for she had worked hard to train our excellent choir of men's and women's voices, and often Mrs. Chance wasn't even attempting to sing the same hymn.

I knew Mrs. Chance by sight, for her favorite method of drying her splendid white hair, after a shampoo, was to sit in the back of her limousine and have her chauffeur drive her, very fast, all the way out to the college and back. Her long white mane streaming out on the breeze was a sight to make heads turn, even in Texas.

I must say that Mrs. Chance was very polite to me the day I approached her on her porch and tried to sound her out about returning to church, but she was also noncommittal. Then I happened to mention that Bishop Kinsolving was coming to Bryan the following Sunday for confirmations. "What a pity," I said, "that he will have to put up with me at the rectory. They tell me he always used to stay here with you, for of course everyone knows you have the finest house in town."

A pleased flush of pink appeared on each cheek, but she kept on rocking. "The Bishop," she said firmly, "will be entertained here, as usual. And as for you, Dr. Ray, you may expect me at Sunday morning service." No further discussion. She was the "hostess with the mostes'," and she wasn't going to lose her social leadership for any silly old grudge.

Everyone at this time was raising money for Belgian relief, and the women of St. Andrew's planned a giant bazaar to go on for ten days. All the merchants in that part of Texas were solicited to donate products for the cause, and the ladies were busy baking cakes and sewing aprons for the raffles. But it was left to my mother to come up with the greatest attraction of all. Not long before, President Wilson had married Mrs. Edith Bolling Galt, and Mrs. Galt was a cousin to Mother through the Bollings of Virginia. So Mother sat down and wrote "Dear Edith" a letter, telling her all about our church bazaar and enlisting her help. Back from the White House came a most exquisite doll, beautifully dressed, together with a handwritten letter and instructions to put them up for sale. This First Lady doll, as the women delightedly christened it, gave great éclat to the bazaar, and won us an enviable amount of space in the newspapers. But this last, it developed, was a tactical error.

The booth with the doll was mobbed on the day the bazaar opened. Everybody wanted a ticket, and some bought them in blocks. Then, all of a sudden, a police officer stepped up to Ara Haswell and said, "I'm sorry, Mrs. Haswell, but in about a half hour I'm supposed to come back here and arrest you and Dr. Ray

for running an illegal lottery. The Baptist minister has filed a complaint, and I've got to do something about it. I thought you might appreciate a little previous warning."

We certainly did. Ara Haswell was a woman of great resourcefulness, and had no intention of forfeiting so much money. She sent over at once to her husband's stationery store for all the pencils they had in stock, and a half hour later, when the officer returned, she was doing a land-office business in selling lead pencils! Of course, there was no law against the fact that each pencil just happened to be wrapped in a ticket entitling the holder to a "chance" on the doll. That was merely incidental.

This period in Bryan was one of the most enjoyable interludes of a very happy career. I might have remained there much longer had not America, in 1917, declared war on Germany. Chaplains were needed overseas, and both the Red Cross and the Church sent out urgent appeals. I submitted my name to the Red Cross, resigning at the same time from St. Andrew's. As always happens in wartime, all our decisions and moves were made in a hurry. Mother decided to return to Mississippi for the duration of the war, and Alice elected to remain in Bryan, where she had made many friends. I bade farewell to the Haswells, the Ashtons, and all the splendid people with whom I had worked for nearly two years, and returned to New York. Dr. Lubeck was going on summer vacation, and while I awaited instructions from the Red Cross, it would be my pleasure to relieve him for a month at Zion and St. Timothy.

Oh, what a treat to be back in Manhattan! It was midsummer, of course, and the city was frying. The theaters were closed, and many of my closest friends were away in the country. But all the same, it was that magical island, the place I called home. I saw all of my friends who were still around town, and enjoyed the very warm welcome I received from the people of the parish.

Life was so exciting, in truth, that I tried to overlook the fact that I had had one or two mild attacks of appendicitis. Then one day, as I stood in the door of the church talking to a friend of mine who was also a doctor, I felt a sharp pain. "What's the matter?" he

asked quickly. "Are you feeling all right? You look perfectly green!"

I was about to tell him that I felt green, too—quite horrible, in fact—when I simply keeled over and collapsed in his arms! The next thing I knew I was speeding up to St. Luke's in an antiseptic-smelling ambulance, and was being unloaded in the emergency room. Dr. Nathan Green, who had operated on me when I had the tonsillectomy, happened to be on duty at the time—a lucky thing for me. Since he already knew me so well, both inside and out, he was able to proceed without the usual preliminary tests. That probably saved my life, for there was no time to lose in removing the appendix. The wretched thing had burst!

CHAPTER VI

Illness and Despair—I Discover the Meaning of Prayer—Miss Aileen Benjamin—I Become Dean of Dallas—Adventures with a Motorcar—Texas Dollars in the Collection Plate—Aviators at Love Field—Spanish Influenza—Sister Agatha—I Gaze into a Crystal.

I HAD HAD a very close brush with peritonitis, and my recovery was slow. Lacking penicillin and all the miracle drugs that were to come along later, the doctors found it hard to bring my temperature down. I lost strength steadily, until the bones began to poke through my skin and my hands showed translucent when I held them up to the light. After several weeks of this, it began to dawn even on my benumbed senses that I quite possibly wasn't going to recover at all!

I had helped prepare many souls for death, and in all honesty, I don't think I feared the act of dying so much as that I resented not having been given a fair chance at life. I had gone to some trouble to get an education and to equip myself for a career in which I was extremely interested, and it did seem very bad management—not to say a bit highhanded—that I should be yanked off the stage before given a try. Sick as I was, I was by no means reconciled, and

I began to "try hard" to get well, much as an insomniac "tries hard" to go to sleep. And with about the same result. The more anxious I became, the worse my condition.

Then someone sent me a book that I was too ill to read. Just off the press, it was entitled *The Meaning of Prayer*, and was written by a young professor at Union Theological Seminary. Aileen Benjamin, who had been hovering around me in constant attendance, as she had during my previous illness, picked it up one afternoon and began to read it aloud.

This was my first acquaintance with a man for whom I was to develop a deep admiration as time went on. Harry Emerson Fosdick was then a young man not much older than myself, and as yet practically unknown except to his former parishioners in Montclair, New Jersey, and to his colleagues and pupils at Union Theological Seminary, where he had now gone to teach. But he was already a man of strong and vigorous opinions, an original thinker who was later to be called "heretic" by the Fundamentalists, and asked to leave his pulpit because he dared, among other things, to defend the right of scholars to investigate the authorship of the Scriptures, and the right of scientists to trace the evolution of man. His "heresies," however, found sympathetic listeners, for eventually John D. Rockefeller built him the four-million-dollar Riverside Church, and he became the first—and in my opinion the best—of the modern evangelists known as "radio preachers."

I suppose *The Meaning of Prayer* hit me so hard because it came to me at a moment when I desperately needed it, and when my own life's forces were at their lowest ebb. We fail at prayer, Fosdick pointed out, or prayer seems to fail us, because we have become stale at it, like very dull pupils repeating over and over a well-known exercise. We have let our prayers become a *pious form* rather than a *vital transaction.* God is not a tyrant to be placated or wheedled, nor does He need to be reminded of our problems and needs. He who marks the fall of a sparrow is better able to know our wants than we are ourselves, so why waste the precious moments of prayer informing God of what is wrong? We miss the whole point, the

whole *vital transaction*; for God is an everlasting fountainhead of life in which we have our existence, no matter what, and in whom we endlessly exist, here and hereafter.

As this understanding flowed about me, I could hardly wait for good Miss Benjamin to leave so that I could be alone. The need for prayer had suddenly become like a hunger, a thirst, or a new form of the fever. I no longer had any desire to plead for physical recovery, for whether I lived or died seemed almost of equal importance, or no importance at all. It was a mere incidental, like trying to decide whether to live in the city or the country. I said the Lord's Prayer with such new understanding that it might have been something I had never heard before, and when I came to the words "Thy will be done," I had a sense of great relinquishment and peace. I floated off into a dreamless sleep of utter repose, and slumbered for hours.

When I awoke, the nurse was there to take my temperature. She glanced at the reading, looked very surprised, then shook the mercury down again and stuck the thermometer back under my tongue. I was rather enjoying it, for I had known the moment I awoke that the fever was down—and in fact, they couldn't get anything but a normal reading out of me from that time on. It was merely a matter now of building up strength, and when they told me I could leave the hospital, I went with Byrd Wise down to Atlantic City for a couple of weeks. I was still very thin, and it took a while to get some meat on my bones.

Though I was recovering, I was out of a job, and it would be quite a while before I would be equal, physically, to overseas duty. I was wondering what I could do with myself meantime, when an official-looking envelope arrived for me from Dallas. It contained a letter from the vestrymen of St. Matthew's Cathedral in Dallas, asking me if I would consider an appointment as Dean. It meant going back to Texas. It meant giving up all idea of overseas duty. But, on the other hand, the Dean of the Cathedral at Dallas was also chaplain to the aviation recruits being trained at Love Field. I would be

working among boys about to go into warfare. I wrote back my acceptance.

I arrived in Dallas toward the end of 1917, and was instituted Dean of St. Matthew's on the first of the new year. The parish was much larger than anything I had been accustomed to, for Dallas even then was a flourishing city. How rapidly it had grown was evidenced by the fact that when Bishop Garrett, my immediate superior, had first come there in 1874, St. Matthew's had been just a little wooden church in a mud-paved town. Since then, he had been forced to build two churches to keep up with his growing congregation, the second being the Cathedral.

In coming to St. Matthew's, I was succeeding the Rev. Harry Tunis Moore, who had resigned as Dean to become Bishop Coadjutor of Dallas. I was present at his consecration shortly after I arrived, when eight bishops attended from all over the Southwest, including my own Bishop Kinsolving. How much I may have owed Texas George for this Dallas appointment I never knew, but it was obvious that he was happy to have me back in his corral; and all the more so, I suspect, because his own son, Ovid, remained in the East. For some reason or other, Ovid was one of the few Kinsolvings who had no desire to be a bishop in Texas. He had a parish in New Jersey for a number of years, and now is rector of a pretty little church near Fairfield, Connecticut.

For those who may not understand the office of Dean of a Cathedral, let me define it as meaning rector of a cathedral, as distinguished from the bishop, who is its administrative head. The bishop runs the diocese, but the dean runs the cathedral in its function as church. There are, in fact, two systems now in effect in this country in regard to cathedrals. One is the English system, which prohibits the bishop from mounting the pulpit without being specifically invited to do so by the dean, and the other is the American system, which permits the bishop to celebrate services more or less at his discretion.

St. Matthew's was run on English lines. My immediate superior, the Right Rev. Alexander Charles Garrett, was known as the "blind bishop of Dallas." He was an Irishman who had married a lady of the Irish nobility, and with his silken white hair curling down over the back of his collar he looked very aristocratic and very Anglican —a double, in fact, for Sir Aubrey Smith. In his declining years he had become almost totally blind, but he could still carry on his work since his devoted secretary, Miss Kathleen Lawrence, served very efficiently as his eyes and his ears. It was sometimes said, before Dr. Moore succeeded to the bishop's throne, that the diocese of Dallas had long been run by a woman. And most ably run, too.

I soon found that one of the things Dallas needed very badly was a suitable home, or hostelry, where young working girls who did not earn much could find a place to live among decent surroundings. I mentioned to Mrs. McReynolds, wife of a prominent physician, that there was an organization called The Girls' Friendly Society which was set up nationally to answer exactly this sort of need. But their headquarters were in New York City, and that was such a long distance away!

To my amazement she answered: "Oh, that's no trouble at all! You just tell me what we need to find out, and I'll leave for New York right away." As simple as that. I swear that Texas women must live with a bag all packed, for she was on a train in no time at all, and back in a few days with the charter and everything we required. Then, with the help of Mrs. Thomas W. Vardell, Mrs. H. L. Edwards, Mrs. Helen Letcher and other enthusiasts, we found three big houses standing all together, knocked out some of their inside partitions, did some remodeling, and opened for business. The Girls' Friendly Inn had accommodations for seventy-five girls, and offered excellent cooking, comfortable rooms, and pleasant, homelike surroundings at prices that came well within the tiniest income. My sister Alice who, with my mother, had come to join me at the deanery, supervised the Inn in its earliest days and worked very hard at it. I am happy to say it is still flourishing and a credit to the community after all these years.

In the midst of all this competence, I often felt like the village dolt. For example, they gave me a motorcar—for, of course, walking in Texas was even then a lost art—and expected me to drive myself around. Licenses were not required in those days, so despite the fact that I had never driven before, I simply cranked up the motor and tootled off down the street. It soon developed that I could steer fairly well so long as I kept straight ahead, but that when I needed to turn around or back up, I was in immediate trouble. So were all the pedestrians in my vicinity, and my driving quickly became so notorious that I understand they started calling me "the mad Dean of Dallas." Finally, one day, I got caught in the streetcar tracks and held up traffic for more than two hours. That was when my junior warden, Will Lawther, decided that something had to be done, for he came to me that evening and said, "I've been speaking to Helen"—Helen was his wife—"and she has offered to act as your chauffeur. Is this all right with you?"

I was more than satisfied, for Helen Lawther was an excellent driver and a pleasant person to have around. She would show up at the rectory when I was due to start out on my rounds, and she would bring me back when I had finished. The arrangement was working out fine so far as we all were concerned, but it wasn't long before a rumor started up that the Dean and a certain young married woman were driving out together, and "somebody ought to tell her husband what is going on."

Somebody did take it upon himself to tell her husband, and Will Lawther was so indignant that he turned heaven and earth to discover who had started all the talk. To everyone's astonishment, he traced it right back to a bewildered young cleric on our own cathedral staff. The culprit admitted he had observed to several people that he "thought it looked strange" for the Dean to be riding around with the junior warden's wife, but swore with tears in his eyes that he had intended no harm! I am sure that he hadn't. Like many people who gossip, he had merely hoped to be interesting; and who ever failed to get attention with that magic phrase, "Have you heard?"

He apologized abjectly, but that, of course, can never undo the damage of a few idle words.

Lent came around, and Easter Sunday is always a time of great monetary offerings in the Christian churches. I was accustomed to the heavily laden alms basins at Zion and St. Timothy; and so, on Easter Sunday, when my vestrymen marched up the aisle in solemn procession to hand me the collection plates, I was braced to take a fairly heavy load in my hands. But nothing like this! As I accepted the first plate, my knees nearly buckled under me. Then I saw why. In Texas, apparently, it was the custom at Easter to fill up the contribution plates with big, shiny silver dollars! The pile weighed a ton, and was very pretty to look at, but when the vestrymen had finished stacking up the coin hours later, all those gleaming cartwheels together amounted to only a fraction of what the same plates would have held in plain old-fashioned greenbacks.

I decided we had better be solvent than picturesque, and so I called on several of the women parishioners, such as Mrs. Edwards and Mrs. McReynolds, to help me out with the problem. While I could say nothing personally, they could easily pass the word along at parties that paper offerings would, in the future, be more welcome than silver. This was quite cricket, I hasten to add, for even in those pre-oil days there was money in Dallas, and it was a commonplace occurrence for the wealthier merchants or planters to spend thousands of dollars on a party at home or an open-house weekend at the country club. No one had ever before spoken to them plainly about the needs of the church, beyond their annual pledges, and many of them had become accustomed to giving a dollar at Easter and a quarter on Sundays. It was a sort of "penny for the poor box" conception carried over from childhood. Now all that was changed, and our contributions became a little more commensurate with our needs as a cathedral, and with the ability of our communicants to support it.

From the day I arrived, much of my time was spent with the young fliers from Love Field, many of whom came to me with their troubles and anxieties. I was grateful now for my earlier experience

with the students at A & M, for it had given me insight into the emotions of youth and enabled me to be more helpful and understanding. Many an evening I knelt in prayer with some boy who was about to make his first flight in the morning—and you needed to pray in those days, for the crates were little better than the first model the Wright brothers had got off the ground at Kitty Hawk, mere slats of wood and wire. Crashes were frequent, and often they were fatal. I held funeral services, and shipped bodies back home, with sickening repetition. We built a special chapel in the Cathedral which we called All Souls' Chapel, and here we kept candles burning for all those in peril. The only thing that made those days supportable was the unquestioning belief we had in our cause.

I believed in the rightness of the war of 1917 with all my heart and all my soul—and I have believed in the rightness of no war since. Far from our ending war, we have blundered into a period of "hot wars" and "cold wars," and feel we are doing pretty well for ourselves when we can point to the international situation and announce that for today it is merely lukewarm! It should be increasingly obvious to everyone, I should think, that if peace on earth is what we want—and we had better want it—then war is not the answer. And so, even at the risk of being occasionally out of step, I have never since succumbed to the blandishments of military slogans. The only slogan I heed is the four-word injunction, *Thou shalt not kill.*

My offering of prayers for the souls of our enemies in World War I brought me some rather sharp criticism from my own Bishop Garrett. Born in the British Isles, he was very pro-Ally. Bishop Moore the coadjutant, who was then acting as bishop, supported my views and let me continue to ask God's mercy upon the enemy as well as ourselves.

And some of "the enemy" who needed God's mercy were right here at home—I mean those loyal Americans whose only treasonable act was to have German-sounding names. My own beloved Dr. Lubeck at Zion and St. Timothy was undergoing such bitter persecution on the part of certain self-appointed patriots that his

heart was nearly broken, and he wrote me sadly that he was considering resigning. His chief offense was that he had refused to preach hatred and war from his pulpit—his name had done the rest. For all I know, Lubeck may have been a German name once, but Dr. Lubeck was born in England and was English to the core. He was so English in fact that he could hardly bear to explain himself, and was simply crushed and incoherent before such groundless accusations. I wrote and urged him, in the strongest terms I could command, not to resign. He stuck it out bravely, but I knew the war to him was a double-edged torture, and I suffered with him.

But what joy, what thanksgiving, when the Armistice was signed! Now the war to end war was ended, and civilization was starting on an era of peace! I was grateful that the cruel procession of coffins past my chancel would cease, and I would no longer be haunted by the faces of young boys who had crashed to their deaths. But alas, it was only a few months to another great horror! In the spring of 1919, Dallas reported her first death from "Spanish influenza."

The epidemic came upon us in two great waves, in the early spring and in the summer. Not having known such an outbreak of pestilence in all modern history, the people turned back to the grim Middle Ages, and called the scourge the Black Death.

The doctors were helpless. All theaters and places of congregation were closed, including the churches and the Cathedral. We held Holy Communion out-of-doors each day, upon the Cathedral close, employing the service prescribed in the Prayer Book for the sick, or to be used "in the time of the pestilence"—for how could we know how many of those kneeling before us in the morning, in the full bloom of health, might be stricken before sunset? Nay, lying dead! For each day the coffins crowded past us so fast there was hardly time to give decent utterance to the prayers for the dead, and the danger of infection was so great that those who died in the morning were hurried into their graves that same afternoon. The bell was constantly tolling.

As in all times of catastrophe, too terrible to be grasped by the bewildered mind, those who kept busiest were the most fortunate

ones. I spent all day ministering to my own people, then in the evening I would go to the Roman Catholic hospital run by the sisters of St. Vincent de Paul. It was the largest and best-run in Dallas. The sisters wore those big floppy Breton headdresses which are so medieval-looking, but in spite of their picturesque appearance, the nuns were very up-to-date and efficient in their nursing. I knew that their chaplain could not possibly keep up with his tremendous load of work, and so I stayed to assist until quite late at night.

It was a time when all differences and distinctions of creed were tacitly acknowledged for what they really are—of no importance at all. At any moment, the Mother Superior or Sister Angela would come to me and say, "There's a young man over there who cannot last until morning. Do come and say the final prayers for him." If it happened that the boy was of the Roman Catholic faith, the sister would light a candle and kneel, while I gave the last sacrament or the commendation for the dying. And meantime, the Roman Catholic chaplain might be doing the same in another part of the hospital for an Episcopal boy, or a Presbyterian, or a Baptist. I do know that the Mother Superior, who was an ardent religionist, cherished the hope that when the epidemic was finished I might become a Roman Catholic priest. But Sister Angela, that most sympathetic soul, would argue, "Oh, what difference does it make? He is doing the Lord's work. I will pray for him, and he will pray for me. Leave him alone." She was blessed with such unworldly wisdom!

We worked at the hospital till the feeble hours of morning. Then after a few hours' rest the day would start all over at dawn with open-air Communion—and oh, the agonized looking for faces that did not appear! Then the long list of sick calls, and the services for the dead! By all standards of health I did not get enough rest during the whole epidemic; and yet curiously enough, though I was constantly exposed, I did not succumb. People laughed at me for using a great deal of camphor. I kept camphor gum in my mouth all the time as a sort of disinfectant. If it had no other virtue, it at least smelled and tasted clean and antiseptic, and therefore had the psychological effect of giving me protection. Many of my parishion-

ers also came through unscathed, and the memory of the way they served their fellow-man in this time of terror, nursing the stricken, administering to the dying, and caring for the survivors who were half-crazed by grief, is one of the high spots of my years in the ministry.

I cannot leave the war years without reporting an uncanny experience which I had in Colorado. I had gone there for a short vacation, and put up at the inn at Manitou Springs. The proprietors of the inn, Mr. and Mrs. Nichols, were stanch Episcopalians and through them I was introduced to a neighbor, Mrs. Bell. Mrs. Bell was the wife of an Englishman who had helped to survey all that area around Colorado Springs, and she was very active in civic affairs.

The big social event during my stay was the opening of the magnificent new Broadmoor Hotel, with a gala evening of entertainment. The proceeds were to go to the Red Cross, and so everyone was eager for a great success. Then came a setback. Everyone knows you can't run a charity affair without a clairvoyant. From time immemorial, all such functions have had their fortunetelling tent, their palmistry booth, their crystal-gazing act or astrologer. It is indispensable, practically, for it is a sure-fire way of raking in the dollars.

Mrs. Bell had sent all the way to New York to get a real live swami, complete with turban and crystal, and he was momentarily expected to arrive, when a telegram announced that he had canceled his engagement! It was too late now to send for a substitute and the disappointment was great.

Now, it so happened that I had picked up a bit of palmistry in my wanderings, and Mrs. Bell had seen me fooling around with it one evening at the inn, to amuse the other guests. "I know!" she said. "We'll put a turban on Dr. Ray and pass him off as the swami. No one will know the difference, and he can tell a fair enough fortune to get by." Since it was for a good cause I could hardly refuse —and if the truth must be told, I was rather intrigued. The ladies got busy swathing my head in yards and yards of silk, and with my

face and hands stained brown, and with most of Mrs. Bell's jewelry festooned about my person, I looked as authentic as most swamis do anyway. After which, they ensconced me in a dimly lighted tent with a crystal before me.

I knew, of course, that the whole trick of fortunetelling is to get the other person to feed you facts about himself; and so eager are most people to oblige, that this takes very little skill. Once I got warmed up, I was able to rush the customers through at no more than five or six minutes apiece, and we were making money hand over fist. All, you understand, for sweet charity's sake.

Then in came a silent young woman of thirty or so, who sat down opposite the crystal, and wouldn't open her lips! I gave her my full line of professional patter, thinking that surely she would open up in response to something I said. But it was like baiting the Sphinx.

Oh well, I thought, the war's a safe enough subject; so I began to make observations about our brave boys overseas and the allies in general. As I prattled on, I glanced again into the crystal—and there, just as clearly as though I were looking at a photograph, I saw a man in British uniform lying prone upon the ground with the smoke of battle rising above him! I felt exactly like the witch of Endor who, the Bible says, was so startled at her own success that she "cried out with a loud voice." I didn't cry out; I just sat stricken dumb, expecting that any moment the vision would vanish. But it didn't; it remained as sharply defined as the print on this page.

Finally I heard the young woman demanding, "Tell me! What is it? What do you see?"

"What do *you* see?" I parried.

She shook her head. "I don't see anything, but I can tell that you do. Oh, please!"

Reluctantly, I told her; and as I described the image, it at last began to fade. When I had finished talking, the young woman said to me, "I had a dream last night that was so disturbing I couldn't go back to sleep. My husband is an Englishman, with the British forces in France. We have always been so close to each other we could practically read each other's thoughts. That's why I came

here this evening—they said you were psychic and I thought you might help. And now you have seen the same thing in the crystal that I saw in my dream. Oh, I know he is dead!" She burst into tears.

I was truly appalled at what I had done. "But I'm not a crystal gazer!" I assured her. "I'm just a young clergyman made up with a turban to do a little harmless spoofing. Really, I'm a fake! Please don't worry about it. I'm sure you'll find out your husband is safe and sound, and it is all a false alarm." I heartily wished I had kept my mouth shut and resisted the temptation to tell what I had seen.

Meantime, we had taken up so much time that the people outside the tent were raising a rumpus. I gave her my Dallas address and asked her to let me know how she made out. Then she departed and I went on with my act. But with much less zest.

After I returned to Dallas, I received a letter from New York. It was from this young woman, telling me that she had just received word from the British war office that her husband was dead. Killed in action in France, the day before I had seen her in Denver. And I know this was true, incidentally, for years later Mollie and I visited this lady in England—she was then married again—and were guests in her house. She showed us the telegram.

This was the only "psychic" experience I have ever had in my life, if that is the word for it, and for this I am grateful. Once is enough.

CHAPTER VII

I Become Engaged to Mollie—Ste. Anne de Beaupré—Little Theater in Dallas—Mollie and I Are Married—The Ku Klux Klan in Dallas—I Am Called to the Little Church.

FOR MORE than four years now, Mollie and I had been exchanging letters about once a month, yet we had not seen each other since that day she left for Honolulu. The family had returned to the United States after war came, and Mollie had for some time served in a woman's auxiliary corps in Washington. She had mailed me photographs of herself and her fellow-volunteers in "Company C," camping out in rows of pegged-down tents and looking very military in heavy marching boots and olive-drab uniforms with long, buttoned skirts. I do not know what this woman's corps was called, but in must have been some 1918 version of the WACs. She was in it for several months before the war ended, and always cherished a medal she received for her service.

Then the war ended, and at about the same time her father succumbed to a heart attack. This was a great loss to Mollie, for she was much closer to her father both in appearance and temperament than she was to her mother. The Hoffmans were sturdy Hollanders, even after three hundred years in Manhattan, and were fond of the good, solid comforts of life. The Watsons, however, were bookish New

Englanders, perhaps a little introspective, but always responsive to talk and ideas. As between the two clans, Mollie and I used to say after our marriage that we could depend on a wonderful table at the Hoffmans', but at the Watsons' we could depend on a wonderful time.

After Dr. Watson's death, Mollie and her mother had gone to the Adirondacks for the summer, to a rustic lodge the family owned at Little Moose Lake. I wrote to Mollie that I was traveling through to Canada in July, for I was taking my mother and sister to Lake of Bays for a vacation. With her permission, I said, I would drop off to see her at Little Moose Lake, and she sent back a cordial invitation to come and be their guest.

I left my mother and Alice in New York with friends, while I hurried up to see Mollie. Our reunion was joyful, but I soon discovered that I was not the only guest. The place was a sort of floating colony overhanging the lake, and there was a constant commotion of guests, friends, and neighbors dropping in at the front door by canoe, rowboat, or skiff. I could no more row a boat than I could drive a motorcar, but Mollie was an expert rower, so she manned the oars, while I unchivalrously sat in the stern and did the proposing. It was certainly not the romantic setting I had envisioned during these last four years, but at least it was *happening*. And Mollie said Yes!

Oh, but of course there were impediments—we could not be married right away. First, she herself did not feel like marrying until the year's mourning for her father was over. And next, she did not wish to leave her mother until Mrs. Watson had adjusted to her widowhood and her new way of life. This meant a wait of another year, maybe, and perhaps a little longer, but I happily agreed. Now, at least I had her promise.

I then went back to New York to collect my mother and sister, and we all journeyed up to the Lake of Bays in central Ontario. This is a heavenly spot, which I recommend to anyone who wants to take to the woods—a beautiful forked lake which lies lost among deep-green forests of spruce. I dressed in old tweeds, lolled around

on grassy banks, and sometimes went for a swim in the ice-cold water. But mainly I lay around reading, or dreaming, or watching the trout snatch at flies on the surface. They were safe so far as I was concerned, for I was too lazy and contented even to bait a hook.

But while I was being so delightfully idle, Bishop Garrett's secretary back home in Dallas had been busy with the mails. It had appeared only suitable to Miss Lawrence that the church authorities in Toronto be told that the Dean of Dallas was among them. Consequently, when I returned by way of Toronto, I found that I had been invited to a tea party being given by the Dean of the Cathedral that afternoon.

I had no clothes with me, except the baggy old tweeds I had been knocking about in all summer, but I thought, I will just pop in at this garden party or whatever it is, make my excuses and pop out again, and hardly anyone will notice me. So I dug in my briefcase for a rabat, or clerical collar, put it on with my tweeds, and went as I was.

The first thing I discovered was that the party wasn't being held out-of-doors, or any place informal—it was being held at the Cathedral deanery, in its handsomely furnished reception rooms. Also, as the butler announced me, I saw all these finely dressed dignitaries and their ladies turn toward me expectantly, and realized with horror that *I was the guest of honor*! About half the church officials of western Ontario and western Quebec, with their daughters and wives, had turned out to do honor to the Dean of Dallas—and here stood the Dean of Dallas, a thing of shreds and patches! I felt my face turning scarlet.

Then one of the nicest things I have ever seen in my life just happened spontaneously. That whole roomful of people took in at a glance exactly what had happened, and how embarrassed I was, and with a single accord, they gathered about me and tried to make me welcome. In fact, they put me so much at ease that when the Bishop invited me to dinner that night I readily accepted, and once again had to appear in my tweeds. But I must admit that this whole occurrence taught me a lesson, and I never went traveling again

without taking along some clerical garb for this sort of emergency.

All my life I had heard of the miraculous cures effected at Ste. Anne de Beaupré, so while I was in Canada I made a side trip to this famous shrine. Little did I expect that I would have the luck to witness a cure while I was there; but as I was kneeling among the other pilgrims, I heard a great outcry, "A miracle! A miracle!"

With the others, I jumped up and hurried to where a young woman stood quite dazedly, looking all about her. Those who were with her were weeping with joy, and they told us she had been blind since childhood. Now she could see. A great light had burst before her eyes while she knelt there in prayer, and her sight was restored. It was very dramatic and very compelling, and we all joined in the thanksgiving.

The next day I traveled down to the village where the girl had grown up and spent many hours talking to those who had known her all her life, including the local doctor and the *curé*. All assured me she had been blind since she was a little girl, and quite unable to distinguish day from night. The *curé* and the villagers were entirely convinced it was a bona fide miracle, and even the doctor seemed halfway persuaded. Who was I to doubt?

Back home in Dallas, I was beginning to dabble once more in the theater. Visiting companies had always come to town, but just now, with the war concluded, there was a tremendous awakening of interest in the "little theater movement" all over America. A group of us were sitting around in the deanery parlor one night when someone suggested that Dallas should have its Little Theater too. The motion was seconded with hearty applause, and one young lady offered her father's business premises as a place to hold meetings. He was an undertaker; nevertheless the offer was gladly accepted, and soon the Little Theater of Dallas was well under way.

John Williams Rogers, critic and columnist on the *Dallas Herald*, was one of my best friends at that time. He had been educated at Dartmouth, was interested in writing, and now tried his hand at an original piece for our theater. It was a one-act play en-

titled *Judge Lynch*, and was an instant sensation. When David Belasco offered a national cup for the best American play, the people of Dallas insisted that Rogers and the whole cast travel to New York to compete for the award. And what an uproar there was, what thunderous rejoicing, when the local team steamed back into town, bearing the Belasco Cup as a trophy! Everyone in Texas had to come to see that play.

John Williams Rogers went on to write more plays which were widely produced and reprinted in dozens of anthologies. A few years ago I had the pleasure, here at the Little Church, of marrying him to Miss Kenneth Horan, the well-known Chicago critic and novelist. I have before me a copy of John's fine book, *The Lusty Texans of Dallas*, in which he has related the story of that colorful town—and I recommend it to all who would like something better than a Hollywood conception of our great Southwest.

By the spring of 1922, I began to realize that Mollie and I would probably never be married if we waited for her mother to give us the go sign. She had taken Mollie off to Italy, then on a tour of the Continent, and showed no promise of ever settling down and telling us, "Now is the time, children. Marry, with my blessing."

Consequently, I began to bring pressure to bear on Mollie to marry me that coming July when I should be able to come to New York—and to promise to do so whether her mother was ready or not. To this she agreed, and I at once called in carpenters and decorators to do over the deanery. It was an agreeable old house along Victorian lines, but had long been in need of a little revamping. In this transformation, we were eagerly assisted by members of the parish who wanted to see their deanery modernized and made into an attractive place where they might come for meetings. We had one of the professional decorators from the department store of Titche-Goettinger's supervise the alterations, and by the time partitions were pulled out and moved about, and the roomy old parlors brightened with new paint and chintzes, it was a very attractive home to which to bring a bride.

I came up to New York, and Mollie and I were married at St.

Thomas' Church on Fifth Avenue, on July 20, 1922. That was the church she had always attended, and her rector, Dr. Ernest Stires, came all the way down from the northern St. Lawrence, where he was spending his vacation, to perform the ceremony. I too had known Dr. Stires for some years, for even back in our seminary days, we students had been told that there were two clergymen in New York on whose kindness and understanding we could always depend—one was my own Dr. Lubeck of Zion and St. Timothy, and the other Dr. Stires. He was a very warm and outgoing man, and with an actor's flair for the perfect phrase and perfect timing. I remembered an example of this from my earlier days in New York.

While a curate at Zion and St. Timothy, I received a call one day from the daughters of General Roger A. Prior, a dear friend of mine, to tell me the old gentleman had suddenly died. General Prior had been a commander in the Army of Virginia and a friend of my father's, and ever since I had lived in New York his fine old house on the then-fashionable West Side had been like a second home to me. They were distant relatives, in fact, and I was deeply attached to him and his family. The Priors were members of St. Thomas' parish, and ordinarily Dr. Stires would have handled the funeral arrangements. But he was in Chicago at the time, and so the Priors asked me to come and help out. I went at once, of course, and took charge of arrangements.

Just before the funeral, however, Dr. Stires returned to New York, and being informed of General Prior's death, hurried at once to the house. The widow was greatly comforted to see him, but expressed surprise that he should be back so soon. "Oh, my dear," he assured her, taking her hands, "I would have returned from anywhere as soon as I found you were in trouble!" No doubt he would have—but the fact remained that he hadn't known about the death until after his return. But why quibble? His answer made the whole family feel better, and I'm sure the slight exaggeration was merely prompted by kindness. In fact, I might not have recalled the incident at all had I not been impelled to thank Dr. Stires for coming so far, in scorching mid-July, to officiate at our wed-

ding. "Oh, my dear boy," he said genially, "I would have returned from anywhere on earth to marry you and Mollie!" Which struck a reminiscent bell, but had the same comforting effect on me, in my bridegroom's agitation, that it had had on the Priors. I realized then that it's not *what* you say to people in moments of emotional crisis that has the effect; it's *how* you say it, the sympathy you convey, the tone of voice you use.

Mollie's mother was not to be beguiled by any reassurances of mine that she was not losing a daughter, but gaining a son. Or perhaps that was the trouble. She kept resisting the idea of our marriage right up to the end. She had closed the house on Seventy-sixth Street after Dr. Watson's death, and moved to the Belnord, then brand-new, and the most beautiful apartment house in New York City. Now, to gain an excuse for not holding the wedding reception at home, she moved to a hotel! The poor woman really was having a most desperate time with herself, and I pitied her. Or at least, I felt as sorry for her as my own jubilant state of happiness would permit. However, never underestimate the power of a woman—the recuperative power. When she finally perceived that we were going through with our plans anyway, she called in her dressmaker and ordered her to make a "creation" of black lace and white chiffon. After that, she sent her fourteen-carat diamond to Tiffany's to be reset as a single, glittering pendant, and on the day of the wedding she appeared in all this splendor, with the rest of her jewels. She was utterly stunning, and caused such a murmur of admiration among the guests that I think she was finally reconciled, for she even smiled at me.

Mollie wore the two-hundred-year-old bridal veil that is worn by all Hoffman brides, and which, between generations, remains carefully packed away in blue litmus paper. Need I say she was exquisite? My mother had accompanied me from Dallas, and wore her usual quiet mourning, with no other ornament than the Lady Spotswood cross. Byrd Wise was my best man, and after the ceremony we had a wedding breakfast at Sherry's.

We spent a short honeymoon in Nantucket, then went up to

Lake Louise. After that we visited Seattle, where I was delegate to an Episcopal convention; and so, in time, back to Dallas. There Mollie took her place with the naturalness of the daughter of a clergyman and granddaughter of a clergyman, presiding over the deanery with a graciousness that won everyone to her. "I am no she-rector," she told me at the beginning, and she firmly resisted any attempt to draw her into what she considered an overactive role. She had seen too many clergymen's wives try to run the affairs of the parish, and though she would serve on committees, or pursue her pet projects, she refused to interfere with church business or policy.

One of the first persons I took Mollie to see in Dallas was Sister Angela, with whom I had worked during the flu epidemic. The Mother Superior, who had nurtured such hopes that I might become a Roman priest, had taken it as the end of the world when I announced my engagement. But Sister Angela had said, "What difference does it make?" And smiling at me, she had added, "You bring your wife to see me just as soon as you get back from New York. If you love her, I know that I will love her too." So the hospital was one of the first places we visited, and Sister Angela and Mollie became lifelong friends.

The postwar period brought with it a new interest in psychology, self-improvement, and matters of personality. The science of Freud was still young and little understood, but there was such need of discussion and enlightenment, at least so far as our understanding went, that I gave a series of twenty lectures in psychology that winter, to which the public was invited. The response was so eager that thereafter we established a class, or sort of clinic, in personal religion and allied problems, which continued as long as I was in Dallas. It did a great deal of good and was, so far as I know, one of the first experiments of its kind in the country.

But life in postwar Dallas was not always a thing of beauty; it had its ugly side too. During the first weeks of Lent in 1923, a boldly lettered notice was posted at night on the door of the Cathedral, forbidding us to hold our usual Good Friday services during

Holy Week. If we did, the notice warned, I would be subjected to the same sort of treatment that had been handed out to others who had dared to defy the hooded hoodlums of the Ku Klux Klan.

I had half expected this to happen. For some time past, there had been floggings of Negroes throughout the great state of Texas, and one victim had been branded on the forehead with a KKK. Clergymen who had denounced these atrocities had been dragged from their beds, taken out to the woods and whipped, then covered with hot tar and run out of town. The Roman Catholic Cathedral in Dallas had been entered at night, its tabernacle broken open, and its holy sacrament flung upon the floor. The Klan was exceptionally powerful in Dallas, and so when my verger brought me the notice he had found nailed to the door, I did not dismiss it as the idle prank of some mischievous boys. I knew it was an ultimatum from dangerous men who would interfere with our freedom of worship if they possibly could.

I answered by making a loud public announcement—loud enough to be heard throughout the Brazos—that any persons attempting to molest services at St. Matthew's would be prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law. Then I got in touch with all the influential men and civic leaders I knew and enlisted their support. You must bear in mind that the Klan paraded the streets openly, eight hundred strong, by torchlight. People on the sidewalks stared in paralyzed silence, for who knew whose eyes were glaring at you from behind those masks?

But not everyone was silent. The newspapers fought back, for Dallas has a fine and liberal press. The *Dallas News*, founded by Colonel Alfred H. Belo, is one of the great dailies of the nation; and it and the *Dallas Times-Herald*, published by Edward J. Kiest, both took up the challenge. With these strong papers behind me, I approached the civic organizations to which I belonged, such as the Kiwanis and Rotary, and most important, the Masons. I had been initiated into the Masons shortly after my arrival, and one of my closest friends was Samuel Poyntz Cochran, whose statue, in full regalia, stood outside the Scottish Rite Cathedral. Sam had

great influence in Dallas, and he saw to it that word was spread everywhere that an attack on Dean Ray would not be tolerated by law-abiding citizens. This must have discouraged the bigots, for when Good Friday arrived we held our usual service without interference. Nor were we ever molested afterward, though it had been a nasty business while it lasted, and Mollie had been terrified to see me leave the house.

The Jews of Dallas, by the way, who shared with us the honor of the Klansmen's disapproval, were among the town's oldest and most desirable citizens. They had come to Dallas originally in the pre-railroad days as peddlers and merchants, and had remained to build up such famous establishments as Sanger Brothers, Titche-Goettinger, and Neiman-Marcus. Alex Sanger, who had arrived by buggy thirty years before, lived across the street from the Cathedral and always responded so generously to philanthropic appeals that Bishop Garrett referred to him as "the finest Christian in Dallas." He had a Christian housekeeper, and whenever she was ill, he would send for me to come and minister to her. His nephew, Eli Sanger, had married a member of my congregation, and the last time I visited Dallas I spent the evening with them in the big old Victorian mansion they have lived in for over half a century. On the mantel in the back parlor they still keep the whistle with which Eli's father, Philip Sanger, used to hail the mule cars when he first came to Dallas.

Old Mr. Titche of Titche-Goettinger was another fine representative of the Jewish community. He was godfather of a young chap in whom he was tremendously interested. He educated this boy, and raised no objection when the boy wanted to become a priest. Such men are a credit to any community, and except for the Klan, I saw very little anti-Semitism anywhere in Texas.

By 1922 I had been in Dallas five years, and my parish had increased from six hundred to thirteen hundred communicants. My own rewards had increased also, so that from the eighteen-hundred-a-year and housing which I had received in Bryan, I was now earning about three thousand a year and housing—a very good salary,

if you recall, for that era. It was therefore no dissatisfaction with Dallas that caused me to seek an appointment back North. Had I remained at St. Matthew's, I would probably have succeeded in time to Bishop Coadjutant, and then in due course to Bishop of Dallas. But I had never for a moment forgotten my dream of some day serving at the Little Church Around the Corner, and I did not keep this ambition a secret from those who might help me. It was well known that Dr. Houghton was failing in health, and that his Vestry had been urging him to name a vicar and successor. My name had been submitted, I knew, by the Bishop of Missouri, by Father Hughson of the Order of the Holy Cross, and by Dr. Houghton's own daughter, Mrs. Charles Strombom. She kept house for her father, and luckily for me, was one of my strongest supporters.

You may imagine my feelings, then, when I received a letter in February of 1923, from the vestrymen of Transfiguration, inviting me to come as vicar as soon as Dr. Houghton should be well enough to receive me! I wrote back at once, saying that I would hold myself in readiness for instructions. Then we set about winding up our affairs in Texas, saying good-by to a host of good friends, and preparing to move.

Actually, our marching orders did not come until April. Dr. Houghton had remembered that his uncle had died very shortly after appointing a vicar, that vicar being himself, and he was superstitious about it. But at Easter, when he was unable to conduct services, he said to Mrs. Strombom, "I now know that I shall never go into the church again until I am carried there. Send for Dr. Ray." She did so; and leaving my mother and sister for yet a while in Dallas, Mollie and I entrained for New York.

CHAPTER VIII

Death of Dr. Houghton—His Funeral—St. Mary's Chapel—Kensico Mausoleum—John Drew Arrives to Pay His Respects.

MOLLIE AND I pulled in to Grand Central a few days after Easter in 1923. We were met at the train by Lyman Rhoades and several other of the vestrymen, who took us straight to the Seville Hotel where a comfortable suite had been reserved for us. A house on Thirtieth Street, which belonged to the parish, was being made ready for our residence, they told us, but would not be finished for another few days. This house, which had been left to the Little Church by Sarah Jane Zabriskie, had been used as a club during the war, but was now being fixed up as a sort of second rectory. Dr. Houghton, of course, occupied the regular rectory, adjacent to the church, and he was reported to be very ill there.

He was, in fact, dying. Yet he was able, as one of the last acts of his life, to get out of bed and appear at church the next Sunday—Low Sunday, the one that follows Easter—in order to introduce me to the congregation as his vicar and successor. It must have cost him great physical effort to do this, for his strength was failing rapidly, but he considered it his duty and he carried it off in a most gracious manner.

"My dear people," he said, when he had slowly and painfully

mounted the pulpit, "the time has come when I am unable to fulfill all the duties which, twenty-five years ago, I was quite able to carry out. I feel that I can no longer be responsible, humanly speaking, for the labors that belong to my office as Rector, but that I should have someone on whose shoulders I could lean and feel that they were strong to do the work which the dear Lord appointed for me long ago . . . I am presenting to you today the Rev. Jackson H. Randolph Ray, who by my wish your Vestry have so graciously allotted me, who will, I believe, be strong in the work necessary to be carried out in this part of God's vineyard. I commend him to you. I commend him to you with my love."

After a few more words, he raised his hand in blessing—then descended from the pulpit and walked slowly up the aisle, peering into the faces of his beloved congregation. It was a most touching moment, and we all had difficulty keeping the tears from our eyes. Even so, we had no suspicion how near death he really was. He returned to the rectory, and upstairs to his bed, while Mollie and I went up to the rectory dining room to attend a luncheon Mrs. Strombom had arranged, so that we might meet the rest of the Vestry and some of the congregation.

I took up my duties as vicar at once, for I found parish affairs had long suffered with the decline in Dr. Houghton's health. From the start, the person who was the greatest help to me was the black-haired, sharp-witted secretary, Miss Mary Hanlon, who knew almost as much about running Transfiguration as Bishop Garrett's secretary had known about the diocese of Dallas. She had every detail at her finger tips, knew exactly how to deal with each different person, and had such a true Irish sense of humor, and such a story-teller's gift for describing the funny things that happened, that I often implored her to write her stories down. But she could never be bothered to write when she could talk. She always declared that she couldn't be fired, for she had never been hired! It seemed that she hailed from Poughkeepsie, where Dr. Houghton's son-in-law, Dr. Strombom, had been rector of her church, and that she had come down to New York "just for a few days" to help out until

someone else could be found. That had been in 1916, and she was still running the office in 1948 when she retired—a thirty-two-year stretch of "temporary work," which must be something of a record.

It was only two days after Dr. Houghton had introduced me on Low Sunday, that I was working in the office and suddenly heard Mrs. Strombom call down to Mary Hanlon, "Quick, get Dr. Ray! Tell him to bring the sacraments—I think the Rector is dying."

I hurried into the Lady Chapel of the church, where the holy sacrament was kept in reserve in the tabernacle, and then hastened upstairs to Dr. Houghton's chamber. He was just able to receive extreme unction; then he gave a deep sigh, and died in my arms.

We laid his body out in a room across the hall from his bedroom. He had apparently set this room aside as a sort of shrine to his wife, and I can hardly tell you how startled I was the first time I entered it. He had covered the four walls of this room, from baseboard to ceiling, with pictures of his beloved Mary—not different pictures, mind you, but all the same photograph! It was a portrait study made of her a short time before her death, twenty years before, and it showed her as a sweet-faced woman of forty-five or fifty. He had had hundreds of copies of this photograph made and framed, and the frames had been fastened to the wall in rows, up and down and sideways, so that wherever you looked, you encountered the benign gaze of Mary Pirsson Houghton. Nor was this all. The lower half of the window was almost entirely filled with a large glass replica of the same picture, most skillfully executed in color, so that when Dr. Houghton returned home at night, he could raise his eyes to the lighted pane above, and be welcomed by her countenance.

Everyone knew, of course, that Dr. Houghton was a "little eccentric" on the subject of his wife. He had first fallen in love with her when he was just a young curate, and had heard her voice singing a Tom Moore ballad as he passed the window of an old house in Chelsea. He had not seen her face, and it was months before he could discover who the singer was. Then he learned she was Mary Creemer Pirsson, sister of one of his seminary friends, and he married her as quickly as he could get an introduction and induce

her to say yes. They were happy together—thirty-two years of what appears to have been a most ideal marriage.

As a boy, Dr. Houghton had always been lonely and a little unhappy. What he adored about his wife was that she was a gay and fun-loving person, always singing, always playing the piano, and always acting the fairy godmother to a horde of young boys who played about the rectory. She let them overrun the house, make candy in the kitchen, mess up her pots and pans, and even use her sewing machine to stitch sails for their boats. "Some people aren't very nice to little boys," Dr. Houghton used to say wistfully, remembering how he himself had been chased out of that rectory kitchen by his uncle's busy housekeepers. But Mary Houghton made up for it—just as she made up to him, by her tenderness, for all the hurts he had suffered in life.

When Mrs. Houghton died, in 1902, after a minor operation, her husband never forgave the doctor whom he felt to be responsible, and never reconciled himself to his loss. He erected a beautiful white mausoleum at Kensico Cemetery to receive her remains, and there he kept her in an open casket for the rest of his life. Each week on Wednesday, the day she had died, he made the long trip from Twenty-ninth Street up to the Kensico hills in Westchester County, to bring her flowers as they appeared in season. And every year, on the anniversary of her death, he took along a full choir with stringed instruments to give a concert of holy music after he had sung the requiem Mass. He kept lights burning inside the mausoleum, so she would not lie there alone in the darkness.

One year after her death, he installed a rood wall under the chancel arch of the church, spanned by two bronze gates—to the honor of Mary, the Mother of Our Lord, and to Mary his wife.

Three years after her death, he had completed in her honor the St. Mary's Chapel which opens off the chantry—a quiet retreat which is an exquisite example of the English pointed-Gothic style. The stained-glass windows, through which the sunlight streams from the garden close outside, glow with the rich hues of Raphael's *Madonna del Grand Duca,* and of Botticelli's *Madonna and Child.*

There is a chaste white altar at the end, embellished by mosaics of cobalt and gold; while below, across the apron of the altar, is shown a mosaic reproduction of Leonardo's *Last Supper*. The ceiling is coved, and decorated by a frieze representing angels, shepherds and magi. The floor is a carpet laid in mosaics, again repeating the motif of blue, white, and gold.

This chapel, which today is usually referred to as the Lady Chapel, runs parallel to the chantry and is closed off from it by a translucent screen-wall made of colored glass. The door locks with a key, and during Dr. Houghton's lifetime almost no one was permitted to enter there except his daughter and himself. During the years of his loneliness, he spent many hours in the chapel alone, doubtless on his knees, for there is an inscription which he had cast upon the brass credence, and which reads in Latin: *I make mention of you always, without ceasing, in my prayers.*

There is something so intimate about the feeling of this chapel, even over the years, that one writer has described it, very aptly I think, as "a richly inlaid jewel-box in which the memory of a human love was enshrined." It was from the tabernacle on this altar that I took the reserved sacrament which I administered to Dr. Houghton on his deathbed. So far as our records show, the chapel was thrown open on only two occasions before Dr. Houghton's death—once for the marriage of his daughter when she married Dr. Charles Strombom, then her father's curate, and once for the funeral of Marie Cortelyou Denslow, who had lived across the street. Miss Denslow, a tiny little woman with heavy ropes of hair, had given all her time for many years to the poor of the parish. She had once had an office on the spot where the Lady Chapel was built, and could be found there every day, ready to distribute help and provisions to any in distress. She was known as the "Lady of Charity" of Transfiguration, and was loved and revered by everyone. When she passed away at her home in 1907, Dr. Houghton had her remains brought across the street to lie in state in St. Mary's Chapel. But otherwise, the chapel was kept private to Dr. Houghton's sorrow for nearly sixteen years.

Time, they say, is the doctor of grief, but it was not so in this case. The melancholia touched off in this good man by the loss of his wife seemed to grow deeper as the years went on. He could not bear the darkness or the loneliness of night, so he changed the clock around, and read or worked all night and slept in the daytime. He loved detective stories, which served him both as escape and anesthesia. But with all this eccentricity, Dr. Houghton was a very kindly and conscientious man, and performed his parish work faithfully up until the very last years. Eventually, however, his melancholia increased to the point where he became indifferent to the things of this world, and most of his work was done by the curates.

One of the first persons to appear at the rectory and offer condolences was the famous John Drew. The morning after Dr. Houghton's death, I saw an immaculately dressed figure enter through the lich-gate and swing with grenadier's shoulders up the path to the rectory. Who can this be, I wondered, all so properly attired in striped trousers and white spats this early in the morning? Then I caught sight of the profile, almost as renowned in that day as his nephew's, John Barrymore's, was to be later.

"I have come to express my deep sympathy at Dr. Houghton's death," he said to me in his marvelous speaking voice. "May I leave my card?" And that was my first acquaintance with this "glass of fashion and mould of form," though of course I had seen him many times on the stage. In a sartorial respect, he was the Adolphe Menjou of his day, and his tailors made a point of keeping him dressed one season ahead of the current men's styles. In private life as well as public, he was very much the gentleman, always very meticulous about social attentions and courtesies. He was especially devoted to Dr. Houghton, I believe, because the late rector had performed his marriage service. But he and I also became good friends, and I was often his guest at luncheon at The Lambs or The Friars.

Dr. Houghton's funeral was delayed until his sister, Anna Houghton, could return home from France. Meantime a watch was

kept beside the body by friends, by parishioners, and by members of the clergy. Among the most faithful of the mourners were two Dominican priests, who called me up and asked permission to share in the watch. I gave permission readily, this being one of the rare cases I have ever heard of, of Roman clergymen joining in the obsequies for an Episcopal priest. But Dr. Houghton in life had drawn no distinctions. One of his closest cronies was Father Ducey of St. Leo's, the "fashionable priest," who used to drive down Fifth Avenue in a tandem, with two spanking bays harnessed one behind the other. Father Ducey, with Dr. Houghton, used to meet once a week with Michael Friedsam, president of Altman's, for a friendly game of pinochle and a few steins of beer. The three made as strange a Three Musketeers as has ever been recorded, for Father Ducey was Roman Catholic, Dr. Houghton was Episcopalian, and Michael Friedsam was Jewish. Yet it was Mr. Friedsam who bought a beautiful old mansion uptown on the Hudson and gave it to the Little Sisters of the Poor to be used as a home for aged couples. It is now known as the Frances Schervier Home, and at its entrance can be seen the marble plaque which Mr. Friedsam caused to be inscribed when he made the dedication: *To my two Christian friends.*

But not all of Dr. Houghton's relationships, it developed, could be described as "beautiful friendships." I had the job of calling up those who might be expected to join in the watch, and one I phoned automatically was Father Rich, vicar of the little Chapel of Corpus Christi uptown. This chapel was an offshoot of our own Transfiguration, having been founded by the first Dr. Houghton, and I naturally assumed that Father Rich would be among the first to be considered. To my surprise, he seemed quite taken aback when I asked him to come down and share in the vigil. "Are you sure it's all right?" he asked with some doubt. I assured him it was, and urged him to come, until later I happened to mention to Mrs. Strombom that I had asked Father Rich. "Oh, heavens!" she cried. "Father and he had a falling out about something ages ago, and

Father hasn't spoken to him for years! You'll just have to call him back and tell him it was all a mistake."

I was terribly embarrassed, for I liked Father Rich—he was the man, you may recall, who had knelt before me just after my ordination and asked for my blessing. But the feelings of the next-of-kin are always paramount in death, so I called the vicar back and withdrew the invitation as gently as I could. He did not seem surprised, or even disappointed. "I thought you'd call back," he said dryly, and I could almost see the twinkle in his eye. But *de mortuis nil nisi bonum*—I never did learn what had happened, or why these two excellent men had borne a grudge to the grave.

While we were still awaiting the day of the funeral, Mrs. Strombom asked me to go up to Kensico and put everything in readiness to receive her father's body. She especially asked me to have the marble slab put in place over her mother's coffin, for hundreds of people would be going up for the interment, and she did not wish them to know that her father had kept his wife's body in view all these years.

I went up to Kensico and entered the mausoleum, accompanied by the superintendent of the cemetery. There I looked, for the first and last time, on the face of Mary Houghton. I don't know, frankly, what I had expected, but there she lay as serene and intact as Snow White upon her bier. Twenty years of death had not ravaged her appearance, and if I had not known she had been lying in that tomb since 1902, I would have found it almost impossible to believe. I have since asked undertakers and embalmers about this curious phenomenon, and they tell me that such perfect preservation was due to the fact that all air had been pumped out of the casket after it had been sealed—an hermetic seal, in fact—but that if the glass were broken, and the air permitted to rush in, the body would crumble immediately. I had the marble top of the sarcophagus put carefully in place, without disturbing the glass, and presumably Mary Pirsson Houghton is still lying beneath it, up there in Kensico, as unravished by death's disfigurement now as she was on that day.

About six days after Dr. Houghton's death his sister arrived from Europe, and the obsequies were held. Bishops and clergymen attended from all over the East to pay their final respects to the man who had served Transfiguration for twenty-five years; and the pews in the vicinity of the Edwin Booth window—the window that shows Booth as Hamlet—were reserved for members of the Players and the Lambs. Among the honorary pallbearers were John Drew, George Arliss, Otis Skinner, Grant Stewart, Frank Gillmore, Commodore Elbridge T. Gerry, and Judge Robert L. Luce. The requiem masses were conducted by the Rt. Rev. Herbert S. Shipman, Dr. Lubeck, and myself.

The police had voluntarily shut off the street to all traffic, and after the conclusion of services in the church, the coffin was borne to the hearse, and the funeral cortège proceeded, several hundred strong, up Fifth Avenue to Grand Central Station. There a special train conveyed the mourners, together with a full choir, to Kensico Cemetery.

The burial rites were held within the vault, with chanting and music, and when the last chord had died away, the mausoleum was sealed and Dr. Houghton was left alone with the woman he had loved so devoutly. The tomb has been opened only once since then, and that was to receive the body of their daughter, Mrs. Strombom, who died not more than two or three years ago.

It is now sealed forever.

CHAPTER IX

I Become Rector of the Little Church—A Recalcitrant Curate—Fixing of Wedding Fees—Michael the Verger—Our Trip to Battle Creek—We Remodel the Rectory—The Little Church in Story and on the Stage.

ON THE SUNDAY after Easter, 1923, I was installed as rector of Transfiguration, Bishop William T. Manning coming down to conduct the formalities, and Dr. Lubeck acting once more as my presenter. I had been a boy of nineteen when I had first sat in these pews, with the vesper music playing, and felt so strangely at home here. Now, at thirty-seven, I had come here to stay, and I was most deeply grateful to God and to all who had helped me.

As is customary, the staff at Transfiguration resigned, so that the incoming rector might choose his own people. I asked Michael, the verger, and Miss Hanlon to remain, but I faced mutiny and insurrection from one of the curates. This man had opposed me from the moment I arrived, refusing to speak to me long before I could have given him cause for offense. He would not obey orders, or co-operate in any way, and now he flatly refused to resign. He locked himself in his room, and only opened the door to go off on mysterious errands of his own. It was a ridiculous situation.

Even the sainted Dr. Houghton, our founder, had had trouble

on occasion with curates. It is said that a curate came to him one day and asserted, "Dr. Houghton, I don't like it around here. I'm giving you notice—I'm going to leave at the end of the month."

"But my dear good man!" Dr. Houghton expostulated. "I don't want you to leave at the end of the month! It wouldn't be right. I want you to leave now—today—in fact, this very minute!"

A curate, you see, can be discharged by a rector, since he is hired by the rector as a personal helper. However, I decided to let things ride for the moment, having so much else to do, and hoped that the insurgent might straighten out by himself. Instead of that, he elected to go off to Massachusetts on vacation, without asking leave or giving up his room. I felt, under the circumstances, that this was tweaking the nose of Providence a little too boldly, and so I discussed the matter with Father Hughson of Holy Cross. It was his advice that I engage a new curate, which I did; then we entered the rebel's room, packed up his belongings, and sent them off after him. The rest was silence.

Transfiguration had been one of the first American churches to adopt the high church service, as restored in England in the 1850s. It was beautiful and impressive, and it was my intention to continue it almost without change. But the handling of business details, I had found, was a little bit lax. While Mollie and I were living at the Hotel Seville, I had often come home with my pockets bulging with money I had received during the day for performing wedding services. When I asked Miss Hanlon what was the church's policy with these fees, I was told, "Oh, the one who performs the wedding takes half and sends the other half to the rector." I remember saying to Mollie, as I piled the bills on the dresser, "This is a mighty poor way to do business." But Dr. Houghton was then still living, and I decided to wait till I had been there a little bit longer before I began to sweep too clean.

Now, however, I instituted a ruling that fees paid for weddings, baptisms, funerals, etc., were all to go to the support of the church. This was very important in the case of Transfiguration, a metropolitan church with a vanishing parish so far as the old-time "pillars of

the congregation" are concerned, and largely dependent upon the function it performs for the community at large. Marrying people and burying people constitute its chief source of revenue, since we are not heavily endowed with land or other holdings. But if it was important to the church treasury to receive these fees, I felt it was also only fair to the person wishing to use our services to let him know what he was getting for his money, and exactly how much he might expect to pay.

When I had been in England I had been impressed by the fact that Anglican churches have printed price lists for all sorts of services. This had struck me as being much more considerate than the American custom of leaving it up to the discretion of the bridegroom or bride's father, for invariably some people overpaid grossly, while others took a shameful advantage. So I too drew up such a "price list," which is used to this day, and which is handed to anyone entering the church office and inquiring about arrangements. It is not handed, naturally, to members of the parish who wish to use our facilities, for they are automatically entitled to the full use of the church. But probably ninety per cent of our weddings are for non-members who in no way support the institution, and it is only fair that they pay for music, candles, rehearsals, the services of the verger, and other expenses involved. Such fees are kept to a minimum, as I will explain in a later chapter. Ours is probably the lowest-priced wedding service in New York—and no gratuities or "tips" are required. If such are paid, out of gratitude or the exuberance of the moment, we receive them in the spirit in which they are given and hand them over to the Rector's Fund, which is maintained for charity. The new system was so well received by the public that other churches began to follow our example, and now this policy is in effect, I believe, in most New York churches.

Whenever I think of loyalty—and I suppose I have preached dozens of sermons on the subject—I think of Michael, the verger. His name was Michael Bellizzi, a little man with a shiny bald head who loved flowers and birds with the passion of a St. Francis of

Assisi, and who knew almost as much about making things grow as Luther Burbank. Under Michael's green thumb, the close in front of Transfiguration burst forth with tulips and hyacinths in the spring, was softened by azaleas in May, and by June, when all the little brides appeared, had become a cool oasis in the heart of the city, filled with chirping birds that flicked their wings at the fountain. Over it, at that time, still towered the last of the three great elms which for so many years had served as a landmark of the Little Church. But even this lone survivor came crashing to earth in the hurricane of 1944, missing the south transept as though by a miracle. And now we have no large trees left.

Michael had come to take charge of the garden in 1907, and his eyes would light up when he told you how, in those pre-gasoline days, he had been able to grow roses in the garden, and peonies, and pansies, and Canterbury bells! But not even Michael's skill as a gardener could compete with the lethal fumes of "progress," and we were finally reduced to those standard indestructibles, grass, privet and ivy, and today we are almost overwhelmed with gratitude when a few azaleas break into bloom in May.

Yet, strangely enough, one symbol of our former lushness remains—our unbelievable fig trees! One day, in the early part of my incumbency at the Little Church, my Italian barber informed me that he had brought back several "little fig trees" from his recent trip to the old country, and that I was to plant them in front of my church, to grow and burgeon like the fig trees in the Bible. "But they will never, never grow!" I expostulated, thinking how even our geraniums were curling up and dying.

The barber insisted that they would grow, however, and seemed so piously convinced of it that I could not flout such unquestioning faith. I carried the little nurslings with me back to the rectory, cradling them in my arms all swaddled up in an Italian-American newspaper, and Michael took them from me with the tenderness of Pharaoh's daughter receiving the foundling. What he did with them when he took them out to his garden, or what secret rites or incantations he may have performed, I have no idea; but I do know that

for many years now, we have been *picking figs* from those trees! Of course we have to be a little quick about it, exposed as they are to the public gaze; not that small boys or visitors covet their plumpness, but in New York the street-cleaners are abroad very early in the morning when the rest of us are sleeping. To the last man they hail, I should imagine, from Mediterranean climes, for the sight of a ripe fig hanging all golden and jolly just beyond an iron fence seems to present a temptation they cannot resist. Consequently our gardener sleeps at some very odd hours during the fig-bearing season, the better to be up betimes in the morning with an eye on our crop.

Fig trees, once adjusted to their surroundings, are almost as easy to propagate as rabbits. We now have about a dozen trees, I would say, and we often share our harvest with some deserving person for whom we wish to express a personal regard. One year a basketful went to Hy Gardner for generous treatment in his column. Another time, some went to Martha Deane of WOR, on whose program I occasionally appear. And this last season, we sent a sampling around to Alice Hughes of the *World-Telegram* and King Features, a very lovely lady who has long been a good parishioner and friend. More expensive gifts these people may easily receive—but from where else, I ask you, will they get ripe figs grown within the shadow of the Empire State Building? And sprung, what's more, from consecrated ground?

Though Michael had been born in this country, he recognized only one holiday a year, and that was Columbus Day. Every October twelfth he would dress up in his best and vanish for a hard day of marching up the Avenue and celebrating afterward; then he would return to a solid twelvemonth of uninterrupted work, for no other holiday was, in his opinion, worth a whole day of loafing. Seven o'clock in the morning would find him opening up the church to see that all was ready for the eight o'clock Communion, and the first wedding of the morning would find him sweeping up the rice and confetti that cluttered up his precious walk and made

a mess of his garden. At six o'clock, after evening service, he would lock the church for the night and go home to his family.

Michael was nobody's idea of a hero in physical appearance, but when the chips were down, he had the heart of a lion. If he hadn't had, I wouldn't be writing this account of him today. I owe my life to his quickness and courage.

I was at the ten o'clock Communion one morning, in what is called the Bride's Chapel—more properly, the Chapel of the Holy Family—when I had an uneasy feeling that someone was lurking behind me. I had an impulse to turn, that almost unbearable prompting we all feel at such times, but I was in the midst of the service and did not wish to interrupt it. I therefore continued, telling myself it was just a case of nerves, and that in any event nothing could happen to me while I was about God's business. Then all at once there was a shriek, a real roar of outrage and warning from Michael, who was in the first row—and he went shooting past me like a football player lunging into a tackle. I swung about, to see him throw his arms around a wild-eyed individual who was just behind me with an upraised knife, and then the two of them wrestled fiercely, in silence, just within the railing of the chancel. Of course, as soon as the rest of us got over our surprise, we leaped to Michael's assistance and got the maniac subdued and disarmed.

This would-be assassin of mine was not an actual stranger, for he had been hanging around the church for some time, acting queerly. He was a Swiss barber whose family assured us he was "absolutely harmless and wouldn't hurt a fly," even though he used to show up with chains and bits of bread and all sorts of trophies strung about his person, and on Sunday made the Stations of the Cross over and over, from beginning to end. We had been reluctant to cause trouble for him, if he were truly harmless, and so we had let the matter ride until the inevitable happened. The poor man began to hear voices, and was convinced that God had appeared to him and commanded him to make a human sacrifice in the manner of Abraham and Isaac. He saw me standing at the chancel with the red wine of the sacrament in my hands, and recognized me

at once as the intended victim. He circled around to the back of me quietly with his knife, and if Michael had been just a little less observant, or a little less courageous, I most certainly would have ended up with a knife between the shoulders. *But, lo, Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me*, as in Daniel's vision; so is it any wonder that Michael Bellizzi seems to me, in spite of his bald head and horny hands, to be a prince among men?

After this experience with the maniac, Michael appointed himself a sort of guardian angel to look after us all. Poor Miss Hanlon one day was sitting at her desk in the office when a belligerent character wandered in from the street and demanded a handout. He was not the usual sort of panhandler, but a very hostile and aggressive person. Miss Hanlon gave him the price of a meal—which she would have done in any event—but instead of pocketing the money and taking his leave, the intruder planted his feet squarely and began to harangue her. "Sitting there on your fanny all day, doing nothing," he shouted, "while I have to work if I want to eat, or else go out and beg! Do you think that's fair? Look at this great big rich church here, hauling in the money! I suppose you think I ought to get down on my knees and say thank you, please, for a measly half dollar?"

Miss Hanlon, terrified, had reached under her desk unobtrusively and pressed the buzzer for Michael. He, warned by the urgency of the way she rang it, came in on the double, and was just in time to hear the last of the harangue and size up the situation—another crackpot on our hands!

"What d'*you* want?" the intruder demanded, swinging around as Michael entered and aiming a haymaker right at his head.

Michael ducked the fist. "I just want to show you something," he said firmly. "I want to show you how I work in the garden, and how well my flowers grow. Come on out and see."

But the fellow only sneered, and made another pass at Michael. Miss Hanlon, who was watching every move, said that Michael just seemed to drop to the floor, while at the same time he reached out and gave the menace a little push in the knees. The fellow went

down, his legs shooting out from under him, and the back of his head hit the floor with a deservedly hollow thud. While he still lay there, too dazed to grasp exactly what had happened, Michael picked up both his heels and hauled him out through the door the way he used to trundle his wheelbarrow behind him when it was full of rubbish. After he got the offender out in the garden, he "revived" him thoroughly with the cold, running hose—and the last seen of our bully, he was tearing out through the gate and down Twenty-ninth Street. He never invited our beneficence again.

Michael, being Italian, had been born and baptized in the Roman Catholic faith; but since he was busy at the Little Church every day in the year, except on Columbus Day, he rarely got around to going to mass. One day he came to me with a more than usually serious air.

"Dr. Ray," he said, "I love this church, and I attend all its services. I know more about it now than I do about my own church. What would I have to do to become a real member?"

"Why, very little," I told him. "Anyone who has once been confirmed in the Roman faith, can be received into the Anglican Church with just the blessing of the Bishop. That is because, aside from allegiance to the papal authority, the articles of faith are almost identical."

And so it was done. When the Bishop made his next visit, Michael received his blessing, and became a member of the church. It made him very happy, and I must say it stirred me deeply, too. I think I have never in my life tried to proselytize anyone, or convert him from his original faith; for, as I have said, I believe all roads lead to God when followed sincerely, and that freedom of worship is the first and most important of our cherished human rights. And by freedom of worship, incidentally, I mean *the right to be different from me,* the right to worship in any way *you* see fit. No lesser interpretation will fill the bill, or fill the Bill of Rights. So you see when Michael became a member of the parish, it was from his own inner desire, and not from my urging. Yet I have never been happier to receive any communicant for, of all the people I knew, Michael

Bellizzi seemed most naturally and completely to "belong" to the church.

Michael was a "good Episcopalian" for the rest of his life, but I suspect that he never quite understood the Protestant's attitude. By that I mean that he never quite grasped the Protestant's tenet that anyone can speak directly to God, without the intercession of clergyman or priest. For example, there was a woman who used to attend some of the missions held at the church by Father Huntington of the Order of the Holy Cross. These included exhortatory sermons, a little more evangelical in spirit than the usual service, and this woman would respond every so often with a hearty, "Amen! Hear, hear! Praise the Lord!"

Now, while "shouting" is often heard among other denominations, especially in the South, it is extremely rare in Episcopal churches; and Michael, who was sitting directly behind this woman, was nettled by her outbursts. Never before had he heard anyone speak out like that at a Roman Catholic church, or here at Transfiguration. He stood it manfully until the peroration, when Father Huntington demanded, "I'm sure everyone here wants to be saved, doesn't he?" And the woman bounced up, crying, "I do! I do! Hallelujah! Praise the Lord!"

This was more than Michael could take. "Sit down!" he cried, leaping up behind her and forcing her back into her seat. "This is no place to thank God! This is a church!"

When Mollie and I heard about this, we laughed until the tears ran down our cheeks. But Michael was quite sincere according to his lights. Church, as he had been taught, was a place where you observed the utmost of decorum, and let the proper authorities do your talking to God.

When Michael died in 1930, his funeral was held in St. Joseph's Chapel with all the honors of the church. Outside the chapel was installed a statue of St. Michael the Archangel, beautifully carved by a woodworker from Oberammergau, and marked by a brass plaque to Michael Bellizzi. Every time I pass it, I imagine I can hear Michael's voice protesting, "But this is too fine for me. Such

a memorial ought to be for someone who was truly saintly and good." But if goodness can be spelled out in loyalty, devotion, and unselfishness, then Michael was one of the best of those who have labored in the service of Transfiguration. We laid him to rest up in the beautiful cemetery at Kensico, where so many of our church members are buried, in our own private graveyard, and there he sleeps near the tombs of the two Dr. Houghtons.

One of the wonderful things about the burial office from the Book of Common Prayer is that it is always the same for everyone. The same words are spoken over king or queen, over highest or lowest, over the blackest scoundrel or the holiest saint. There is no eulogy, panegyric, nor false-sounding praise to ring like hollow brass. Except at public funerals, where some layman may deliver a tribute, there is nothing said but this beautiful service for the dead, which seems as simple and final as eternity itself. *Man, that is born of woman, hath but a short time to live, and is full of misery. He cometh up, and is cut down, like a flower; he fleeth as it were a shadow, and never continueth in one stay. In the midst of life we are in death; of whom may we seek for succour, but of thee, O Lord?* . . . Words that have been spoken over the uncounted millions who have returned to earth's bosom, and which were now spoken over Michael. But when Michael's wife died, having expressed a wish to be buried beside her husband, we asked a Roman Catholic priest to come and consecrate her grave. She had remained a Roman Catholic, a fact which we respected, and she is yet a good Roman Catholic as she lies in her grave, though the land all about her is Protestant ground.

As hot weather began to hit New York in that summer of 1923, I began to show the strain of long overwork that had begun as far back as the winding-up of affairs in Dallas. My health began to suffer, and my mother-in-law, Mrs. Watson, who was an enthusiast for the Battle Creek sanitarium out in Michigan, insisted that Mollie and I go out there for a month or six weeks and take the "bunny-food cure."

The huge sanitarium, which was placed amid some of the most beautiful surroundings I have ever seen, gave the impression of a first-class hotel, rather than of a rest home. That is, it gave that impression until the dinner bell rang. Then you sat down to your choice of raw carrot "cutlets," fresh turnip "tenderloins," or "filets" made of chopped cabbage and nuts. The famous Dr. Kellogg who ran this place had definite ideas on what the human stomach would tolerate, and would brook no nonsense in the matter. Flesh foods were anathema. You lived, like Nebuchadnezzar, on the herbs of the field. You went to bed with the dews of the evening, and you arose in the morning with the rays of the sun. The hours of your day were carefully allotted, the schedule ending just before retirement with a group promenade to the measured cadence of some soothing music.

Hateful to report, after a few days of this regimen, you began to feel wonderful. Your eyes were bright, your gall bladder was alert, and your appetite so sharpened that you could hardly wait for the next delicious meal! At the end of six weeks, I was reveling in the mere fact of being alive, and was overwhelmed with gratitude when Dr. Kellogg had his men in white work out a disciplinary program for the rest of my life.

Then what did I do? The moment Mollie and I found ourselves alone on the train, right next to the dining car, we gave each other a long, candid look, then dashed right in and ordered the biggest porterhouse steaks they could find in the galley! I can taste that steak now—never have I enjoyed anything so much, and most especially since my gall bladder was in such splendid condition to cope with it! I must say in all fairness, however, that I was much impressed by Dr. Kellogg's methods, even to the point of returning several times in the intervening years for a short refresher course and check-up. It was always a wonderful tonic for jaded nerves and a rather world-weary stomach.

President Harding had died that August while we were still at Battle Creek, and we returned to find the city plunged deep in mourning. The scandals that were later to cast such a pall over the

Harding administration had not yet been revealed, and the nation sincerely grieved the loss of a Chief Executive, dead in office. Many memorials were held, not the least of which was the "Actors' Service" held at the Little Church. This was conducted, in my absence, by my new curate, Father Claude Reader, who had once been an actor. He was the son of an aristocratic English family, very well educated and with a wonderful speaking voice, and his training on the stage helped him to make a most effective appearance in the pulpit. The eulogy in this case was delivered by E. H. Sothern, the oldest living of Shakespearean actors, and a man who had been associated with Transfiguration for more than fifty years. The service was attended by George M. Cohan, Mrs. Minnie Maddern Fiske, Cyril Maude, William Collier, Louis Mann, John Drew, and many other celebrities. Of course, such a roster of stage names drew quite an audience, and more than fifteen hundred all told jammed into the Little Church to do honor to "that gentle man who was our President."

Hardly anyone seemed to remember that Woodrow Wilson, another gentle man who had been our President, was still alive in Washington, unhonored and unsung. It had not been more than three years since the two of them had ridden up Pennsylvania Avenue on the way to Harding's inauguration, Wilson to the silent contempt of his contemporaries, while Harding, who was to bring us "back to normalcy," was the hero of the hour. Who could possibly have foretold then that the man for whom the crowds were cheering so loudly would be eternally smeared by the oils of Teapot Dome, while the "forgotten man" beside him would grow in honor as the years rolled on? I know of no better illustration of how hard it is for us to judge of events at the time they are happening; and often, when I am tempted to form an opinion on the strength of the latest bulldog edition, I think back to this striking example of Wilson and Harding.

Mollie and I were still living in the parish house on Thirtieth Street, for it was a prodigious task for Mrs. Strombom to remove her family belongings from the sixteen-room rectory, especially

when you remember that the Houghtons, uncle and nephew, had occupied the premises for seventy-four years. Finally, however, she got the last moving van off to her summer home in Bedford, and we brought in the carpenters for a remodeling job. Mollie's family helped in this financially, for it was a costly business and one which the parish could not well afford. Nor did we see why they should be asked to foot the expenses, since we had every expectation of living in the house for the rest of our lives.

The rectory at Transfiguration was well worth restoring. Outside of St. Thomas', it is one of the few fine rectories attached to a church remaining in New York. It is a noble old brownstone building, five stories high, with a quaint pentagonal tower connecting it to Guild Hall and the church. A small elevator was installed in the last days of the first Dr. Houghton, but otherwise it had remained almost unchanged for three quarters of a century.

Our two wardens, Frank Ford of Ford, Bacon and Davis, and Lyman Rhoades, vice-president of the Chase National Bank, were enthusiastic about the changes we proposed, and found us an excellent architect. The old-fashioned stoop was removed, with its high steps and iron rail, and the first floor was transformed into an English-style basement. This gave us more room for efficient kitchen, pantry, and housekeeping quarters. The second floor, with its handsome high-ceilinged rooms and marble fireplaces, was redecorated for entertaining and became our dining room, sitting room and library. I recall that Mollie took such care to preserve the old-time grace of these rooms that she had some of the original wallpaper reproduced and put back on the walls.

Mollie and I had formulated some extensive plans for the future, but the project that was closest to our hearts from the beginning was the organizing of an Episcopal Actors' Guild which would meet and have its headquarters here at the church. In Texas I had managed to create a *pied à terre* for actors who were off on the road, and now I hoped we could offer them permanent quarters on a national scale. There was good precedent for this, as I shall shortly explain—but before we go any further, I think I ought to tell you something

about the first Dr. Houghton and the founding of the church. No place of worship in America has a more colorful or more unusual history. Nor has any other church that I know of, been the subject of so many plays, poems, stories and songs. A play called *The Little Church Around the Corner* was written by Marion Russell around the turn of the century, and after a successful New York run, toured the country for a number of years. It was so popular that a novel was adapted from the play—a reversal of the usual procedure—and book-hunters may still have the thrill of picking up from some old bookstall a yellowed, paper-bound, twenty-five-cent edition which fifty years ago preceded our "new" pocket-sized reprints. The brightly colored cover showing a snow-clad Church Around the Corner was a reproduction of the lithograph poster that had been pasted up on billboards and barns throughout the country to advertise the play.

In August of 1912, Proctor's in New York advertised a short playlet written by James Horan, and presented by Inez Macauley and Company. It also was called *The Little Church Around the Corner.* In 1920, the musical comedy *Sally,* one of the most melodious bits of enchantment ever presented, showed a whole wedding scene set at the Little Church, lich-gate and all. And in 1923, Warner Brothers brought out a movie called *The Little Church Around the Corner,* featuring a "notable cast" which included Claire Windsor, Pauline Starke, Hobart Bosworth, and Alex Francis. Advertised as the "greatest of all romantic melodramas," it was competing at the box office with James Cruze's *The Covered Wagon* and Douglas Fairbanks Sr.'s *Robin Hood,* just about the time I came to New York to take my office.

Add to this, two books—*Through the Lich-Gate* by Ishbel Ross, and George MacAdam's history of the two Houghtons, which is also entitled *The Little Church Around the Corner*—and you can see that it must be a story well worth the telling.

CHAPTER X

The First Dr. Houghton—Transfiguration Is Built—Fugitive Slaves—Draft Riots—George Holland and Joseph Jefferson—"The Little Church Around the Corner"—The Lich-Gate.

GEORGE HENDRIC HOUGHTON was a New Englander who had come to New York in the late 1830s, at the age of fourteen or fifteen, to make his way in the world. He got a job as a clerk in a downtown store, working from sunup to sundown as everybody did in those days, and in his spare time he studied. His mother had been a New England schoolteacher and had instilled in him great respect for letters; so much so, that by the age of eighteen he had become an accomplished scholar in Latin, Greek, and Hebrew. He was so proficient, in fact, that he was able to give up his job at the store and enroll at the University of the City of New York, paying all his expenses by tutoring others. This was quite an achievement, when you consider that he had done all this studying while working behind a counter twelve or fifteen hours a day.

George's mother had hoped that he might become a clergyman. Probably she had in mind one of the more popular New England denominations, such as Congregationalist, Presbyterian, or Methodist, for she herself was a Congregationalist of the older school, and just as strict a disciplinarian as some old-time Pilgrim father.

"Early my tottering little feet were planted in the Puritan paths and sedulously was I taught to walk therein," Dr. Houghton wrote years later. "With Saturday's sun the week was done. Up into the cupboard went the playthings, down came the Westminster Catechism.

"I remember how once my little child liver was almost frightened out of me, and how I looked from one side to the other to see if the Devil were not holding out his claws to catch me and to carry me off, as the wickedness of the sin that I had committed was being set before me. I had told a boy who was teasing me that he behaved as if the Devil were in him. Away he ran, 'lickety-clipety,' to my good mother, and said, 'George has been swearing!' She took me up on her knee and, beginning with the fall of Adam, went on to speak of Cain and other Bible sinners, and the fearful doom of the wicked, until I thought that Cain was nothing of such a sinner as I was, and that the Devil would surely take me in his claws right off from my mother's knees."

I don't know what kind of inner revolt took place in the boy's soul against this dreadful sort of teaching, but once he was far away from home, he began to cast about for a religion that was a little less harsh. For a while he attended the West Presbyterian Church in Manhattan, but before he was graduated from the University, he had become an Episcopalian and made up his mind to study for Orders.

It has been said of Puritans, that when they rebel they rebel all the way. Young Houghton swung from the plain religion of his ancestors to the extreme high church of the Oxford Movement. In England, a group of clergymen headed by Newman was then protesting the laissez-faire methods of celebrating service which had come in with the "fox-hunting bishops" under the Georges. These men wanted to restore the stately old ritual that had prevailed after the Anglican church had broken away from Rome, and thus save the beauty and meaning which they felt had so sadly deteriorated. One of young Houghton's instructors at the Seminary was Dr. William

A. Muhlenberg, a stanch supporter of the Oxford Movement on this side of the water, and one of the greatest clergymen of his day. He instilled in his student a deep love for the sacraments when performed with beauty and reverence; and after graduation, he appointed the new deacon a curate in his own church, the Church of the Holy Communion.

Young Dr. Houghton seems to have been one of those very intense persons who transform everything that happens to them into lasting results. That very next Sunday an incident happened—almost unnoticed by everyone elese—of such impact upon the new cleric that it changed his whole life.

It seems that Dr. Muhlenberg, wishing to honor the latest member of his staff, assigned young Houghton a seat near the front of the church, not far from the pulpit. The young man was still shy, however, and embarrassed to sit in so conspicuous a place. He therefore asked the sacristan if he could change his seat, and the sacristan led him to a pew halfway up the aisle. The pew was unoccupied.

The service had started and was well under way when a fashionably dressed man came striding down the aisle and stopped beside the pew. He looked at the intruder in disapproving surprise, then quite pointedly held the door open and stood there waiting! It was painfully obvious that this was his pew, that he was paying good rent for it, and that he intended to occupy it all by himself. The new deacon, turning red to the ears, slipped past the rightful owner and started up the aisle. And he would have kept on going, right out of the church and away from that place, had not someone else, more charitably disposed, touched him on the sleeve and pulled him down into a seat.

I said this incident had far-reaching results. It kindled in Dr. Houghton a deep-seated repugnance against the renting of pews, a practice which then was unquestioned and in general use. What about the poor, he wondered, who could not afford such rentals—should they be subjected to humiliation in the House of the Lord? He determined that somehow, someway, he would build a church

with every pew free! Yes, and he would build it in the poorest neighborhood he could find, where the misery was greatest. A "parish of the poor."

He did not, of course, have any money to start with, not even enough to purchase a prayer book. But with great zeal he outlined his project to Arent S. de Peyster, a prominent churchman he had met, and Mr. de Peyster was interested. He, in turn, proposed the idea to Dr. Lawson Carter, an elderly clergyman who lived on East Twenty-fourth Street. Dr. Carter said he had a back room in his house which might be used for the first meetings; and so, with a borrowed organ, borrowed school benches to sit on, and an old pine desk as a pulpit, services began. The communicants approached their meeting place by way of Love Lane, which ran behind Dr. Carter's property, then pushed open a door in an old board fence, and picked their way across a muddy vacant lot, prayer books in hand. It was about as humble a beginning as a church can ever have, but that was the birth of Transfiguration. The date was the first Sunday in October 1848, and we still observe that Sunday as Foundation Day.

The little band held together all that winter, and by the time of the February thaws they had even scraped together, somehow, enough money to purchase a small piece of land! Dr. Houghton's desire was to build in the neighborhood of Bellevue Hospital, which was swarming with the immigrants who arrived on every boat. There was poverty, overcrowding, violence and disease, but no church of any kind; and it was there, he knew, that the misery was greatest.

But a rector is always subject to the desires of his Vestry. The Site Committee, after looking at various locations, found three very desirable lots on East Twenty-ninth Street, just off Fifth Avenue. The section was so far little built-in, being mainly fields where cows grazed all day, and you had an unobstructed view up to the big reservoir at Forty-second Street, and all the way down to Potter's Field at Madison Square. The purchase price was cheap—only twenty-eight hundred dollars—and only ten per cent of this needed

in cash. This meant that for two hundred and eighty dollars they could take title and begin to break sod. Dr. Houghton bowed to the urgencies of finance, and the purchase was concluded. The official address: No. 1 East Twenty-ninth Street.

By late summer, the Building Committee commissioned a contractor to start work on the church, "for a sum of $1900, not including the pews." And on this matter of pews, Dr. Houghton was forced to make a second, and even harder, concession. His vestrymen decided it would be impossible to meet running expenses, let alone pay off the mortgages on building and land, without charging rentals. Dr. Houghton put up a stiff battle, but in the end was forced to surrender. One tenth of the seating capacity was set aside as free, but the rest put up for rent in the usual fashion. It was a bitter pill, and Dr. Houghton swallowed it hard.

The church they built was of the simplest design, a rectangle only thirty-five feet wide and twice that in length. The walls were of Dutch red brick, the roof steeply pitched, and most happily for the over-all design, heavy buttresses were set along the sides at intervals to help support the weight. There was no need of a bell tower or steeple to identify the new edifice as a House of God—the cross upon its rooftree could be seen from afar.

Transfiguration threw open its doors for the first time on Sunday, March 10, 1850. The ranks had now grown to forty members, but they were hardly in a position as yet to pay their rector a salary. Dr. Houghton didn't want it. He set up a cot in a small room of the church, probably the vestry, and this room he cheerfully used as living room, dressing room, bedroom and study. Before long, General Theological Seminary decided to add Hebrew to its course of instruction, and he secured the post of teacher. This paid him an annual salary of five hundred dollars, on which he was able to exist quite comfortably, and carry on his work.

He did not live entirely alone in the newly built church. He had hardly moved in when a fugitive came to him from across the vacant lots, a "poor, miserable, ill-used dog with a rope 'round his neck." The animal crawled through one of the air holes at the back

of the building, and was so terrified of humans that he could be fed only by leaving food where he could come out and get it. It was quite a while before Dr. Houghton could make friends with the animal, but he finally succeeded—the beginning of a mutual alliance that lasted nine years.

The young rector hailed it as an omen that this unhappy creature had sought refuge in the church; for if he had lost the battle on the location of his parish, and lost the battle of the pews, he was all the more determined to work among the poor. There was hardly an alley on the East Side, a shanty or a slum, in which he did not know the inhabitants and their personal troubles. He was such a familiar sight at Bellevue Hospital that most people regarded him as a member of the staff, like the doctors and nurses. "Every ward, almost," we find in his papers, "became nearly as familiar as the room in which our services were held."

Soon a rectory was provided, and one of Dr. Houghton's first acts was to install a night-bell at the downstairs door, with a speaking tube beside it. This was to enable anyone needing his services in the middle of the night to rouse him from his slumbers. "If the Physician of the body has his night-bell," he told his parish, "then the Physician of souls should have the same." And he woke so quickly that he was always at the speaking tube before the last peal of the bell had died away.

He also kept a light burning at his bedroom window to show that he was "in," and to guide those who needed him across the darkened fields. This beacon was so well known that it survives as a symbol even today! A hundred years have gone by, and yet we still get calls in the middle of the night from hotel managers who have been asked to "get a clergyman in a hurry" for some stricken guest. Just recently I hastened to a hotel to administer the last sacraments to a dying man, only to find the clergyman needed was a Roman Catholic priest. Sometimes it is a rabbi who should have been sent for. In such cases, we try to obtain a representative of the person's own faith. But in any event, it seems that the first church most people think of under such circumstances is the Little Church Around

the Corner, and we never let them down. Such confidence is a well-earned and very precious heritage, and we are happy that our light "still shines out"—if not actually from the window, in these well-lighted days, then at least in men's minds.

Meantime, the Church of the Transfiguration was growing. They began to hold services every day in the week, not merely on Sunday; for "ours is a religion of every day," they said. A school was needed for the parish boys, and so a small room was built on at one end to answer this purpose. But within two years, this space was needed for additional pews, and so a gabled attic was erected above it to serve as the school. This is the attic now used for Guild Hall. After this, the enlargements were constant and varied—a transept on here, a chapel on there—until finally the ground plan twisted and rambled in so many directions that New Yorkers began to call it "The Church of the Holy Cucumber Vine!" All of this was done without an architect, but with such harmonious results that Ralph Adams Cram, who helped design the Cathedral of St. John the Divine, once remarked: "The most beautiful church I have ever seen never had an architect at all. It is like a woman who started out life in humble circumstances, but who at the end of her life had become a *grande dame*. I refer to the Church of the Transfiguration." It wasn't planned; it evolved.

Another thing that wasn't "planned" was the tremendous growth of the congregation itself. As increasing immigration pushed into lower Manhattan, the "old families" of wealth began to move uptown. They built themselves ugly brownstone mansions and squat marble palaces all along Fifth Avenue in what is now midtown—and by a mere coincidence, Transfiguration lay almost at their door. They flocked to its services in their spanking carriages, and the young rector who had wanted nothing but a "parish of the poor," found himself gazing into the faces of Vanderbilts and Astors, Livingstons and Rhinelanders, Drexels and Biddles, Schuylers and Roosevelts. Surely, this was one of the most ironic twists of fate that ever made a man a "fashionable success" in spite of himself!

Dr. Houghton took it in his stride. He was not a snob, not even

with the wealthy. Yet this sudden invasion enabled him at long last to begin to beautify the church's interior. He could now replace the old bellows organ with a fine new pipe organ, put up an ornamental iron fence along the street, install a new pulpit and baptismal font, and glorify the apse of the church with the first of many stained-glass memorials—the Transfiguration Window, a copy of the famous Raphael in the Vatican.

Dr. Houghton, as I told you, was high church by principle—that is, Anglo-Catholic. As the means came his way, he began to introduce some of the old ritualistic symbols which were still cause for bitter dissension in the churches of England. He re-established Confession, which had fallen out of use except by Roman Catholics. He replaced the two Eucharistic Lights on the altar, which represent God and Man as the Light of the world. But when he added to these the Processional Cross, many people objected that he was going too far. "That Cross is leading the way, and those candles are lighting the way, to Rome, sir!" one of his critics warned him. But Dr. Houghton stood firm. He felt that whatever uplifted the eye and the spirit, and gave meaning to the service, brought the worshiper that much closer to a kinship with God.

In short, he made Transfiguration one of the very first high churches in America. Even fellow-clergymen were horrified by the changes, and called upon the Bishop to assert his authority. But old Bishop Potter merely smiled and replied, "On the contrary, I think we make altogether too little of the things which teach through the eye." Later, of course, many of these same clergymen began to use the same symbols, and even thanked Dr. Houghton for leading the way.

However, he never permitted the symbol to take the place of the deed. *Fides Opera,* Faith by Works, was the motto he had set in the seal of the parish above the main entrance, and he lived up to the motto in spirit and letter. He still kept his night-bell, still went his ways about the city, bringing fuel, food and comfort to all who sought his help. He treated his wealthy parishioners with the same kindly consideration he extended to the poor, but no more and no

less. He let it be clearly understood that he would in no way alter his sermons or his attitudes to please individuals, or cater to privilege. On one occasion, we find him preaching a very pointed sermon from his pulpit, announcing that Transfiguration never had, and never would, soften its utterances "lest this man or woman of wealth or influence would not come. . . . The man of wealth and of influence," he continued, "has never here been courted, or had place, *for* his wealth and his influence." When the service was over, one of his vestrymen came to him and protested, "How could you have preached such a sermon *at this time, when pews are to be rented or given up*?" But Dr. Houghton coolly replied, "Such a time is a good, an honest time for preaching such a sermon." He still was not reconciled to the renting of pews!

Then, in 1861, the War Between the States. As the first trainloads of casualties were sent north to New York, a military hospital was hastily opened. Dr. Houghton at once volunteered to act as its chaplain, and spent grueling hours by the bedsides of soldiers who knew they were dying and asked him to write a "last message" back home. Often the wards were so crowded that he was forced to read the Burial Office outside—in the street, beside the waiting hearse. For six months he carried on this work, until a regular army chaplain was assigned to the post.

The war brought another great problem—runaway slaves. Dr. Houghton had long been an ardent Abolitionist, and it was widely known in the right circles that a fugitive could always find haven on East Twenty-ninth Street. The church was, in fact, one of the recognized stations of the Underground Railway, helping slaves from the South to escape into Canada. One of the couriers who assisted in this work was a Negro, George Wilson, who had himself been a slave in earlier days. He could move about the city without attracting attention, and it was he who carried Dr. Houghton's messages, and who conducted fugitives to the rectory at night.

But in 1863 Congress passed the Conscription Act, and the public attitude toward slaves in New York City took a very ugly turn. The Act contained the unwise provision that any man who paid the

government $300 would be exempted from service. This clause was naturally interpreted as favoring the rich—and bloody rioting broke out in New York. Since slavery was one of the issues of the war, mob psychology turned against the Negroes, and they were senselessly blamed for the hated conscription. A Negro orphanage was burned to the ground, and it is a matter of police record that during the week of the rioting, an average of three Negroes a day were found hanging from lampposts, beaten and stabbed. No Negro was safe abroad in the streets. They fled to places of hiding, many of them to the churches, and Transfiguration was so full of these refugees that they slept upon the floors of the schoolroom, the library, the vestry, and even overflowed into the main church itself.

One of Dr. Houghton's most loyal parishioners was Mrs. Theodore Roosevelt, who lived on East Twentieth Street, nine blocks away. She took in as many of the fugitives as her house would accommodate. Her young son Theodore, who was then just a boy, remembered all his life, even after he became President, how they had flown the American flag from their house to protect it from rioters.

The feeding of so many people at the church became a problem in itself. The church members helped, and one vestryman, Edward A. Quintard, came driving in all the way from the country to bring money and food. An improvised kitchen was set up on the premises, and somehow all mouths were fed. But a few of the refugees, after spending days shut up in these overcrowded quarters, stole out into the close for a breath of air, and were quickly spotted. The secret was out!

The first warning Dr. Houghton had that the mob was about to storm his church was when a police sergeant in civilian dress took his life in his hands and slipped in to warn him. The police were so far outnumbered that about the best they could do was to scatter detectives through the city to learn the plans of attack. This officer had learned that Transfiguration was marked for attack, and he advised Dr. Houghton to turn the Negroes out into the streets to fend for themselves, or "they will tear the church down over your head."

"I think not," said Dr. Houghton.

The police sergeant stared. "What's to stop them?" he protested. No police could be spared.

"I will stand in the door of the church," Dr. Houghton replied. "I don't think they will pass me." He went on to explain that even a wolf was spared in the Middle Ages if he sought refuge at the altar, and in the nineteenth century he hoped that such mercy would be shown to a man.

The sergeant went away, and they settled down to wait. The air was thick with the smoke of burning buildings, and at a dozen spots on the horizon, flames leaped into the sky. At last the roar of shouting and howling grew closer, and the mob surged around the corner into East Twenty-ninth Street, armed with brickbats, paving stones, cudgels, and knives. Dr. Houghton was waiting for them beside his iron fence, armed only with a cross.

"Turn the niggers loose or we'll come in and get them!" they shouted.

He held the cross high. The people he was harboring, he told them, were human beings like themselves; they had done no one any harm. Let them remember the teachings of Christ, and go away in peace.

Catcalls and hoots.

Then for the first time in his life, and probably the last time, Dr. Houghton lost his temper and gave way to fury.

"You white devils, you!" he cried, brandishing the cross at them. "Do you know nothing of the spirit of Christ?"

His outburst must have stunned them—or perhaps the Irish immigrants among them thought from his cross he was a Roman Catholic priest. At any rate, they began to melt away until even the ringleaders found themselves without support. They vanished too, and the fugitives were saved. A day or so later, troops marched into the city and peace was restored. But during the course of the riots, two thousand people had been killed in New York, and eight thousand injured—casualties as great as those at Shiloh or the Battle of Bull Run!

From this period on, those Negroes who remained to make their homes in New York regarded Transfiguration as their own adopted church. They came every Sunday to sit in the rent-free pews at the back, and Dr. Houghton always stopped to talk to them first, inquiring for their families. They brought their babies to him to be baptized at vespers, and our registers still show the names they chose for their offspring: Napoleon Bonaparte, Ulysses Grant, George Washington, Abraham Lincoln, and even Queen Victoria—hopeful and high-sounding names to greet the new freedom! He established a school for these children, and a Guild for the women.

George Wilson, the courier who had helped with the Underground Railway, now became the doorkeeper at the church, greeting people at the entrance and showing them to their pews. He brought his wife, Elizabeth, to do the cleaning and dusting, and she kept everything shining and bright with a proprietary pride. For thirty years these two were fixtures at the church, loved and respected by everyone who knew them. Then Elizabeth died, and George was so heartbroken he took to his bed. "I am coming," he would call to his wife, "I will be along soon." And he followed her to the grave within a few weeks.

Their passing left such a vacancy in the hearts of the congregation that it was decided to install a memorial window in their honor. A collection was taken up, and what is still known as the "Swing Low, Sweet Chariot" window was installed. It represents the baptism of the Ethiopian by St. Philip the Apostle, and the inscription on it reads: *In memory of George B. and Elizabeth Wilson, Sometime Doorkeepers in This House of the Lord.* The window was placed near the entrance to the transept, and thus George and Elizabeth still "keep the door" after all these years. It is the only memorial to Negroes that I know of in what is generally regarded as a "white man's church," and because of its significance it is one of our treasures.

And now we come to a new phase—the entrance of the actors. A few days before Christmas in 1870, Dr. Houghton was sitting

behind his desk in the rectory study when two strangers appeared and asked to speak to him. One of the newcomers was a very young man, not yet in his twenties; the other, a dignified gentleman whose face would have been recognized instantly by any theatergoer of the time—but not, of course, by Dr. Houghton.

The older man introduced himself as Joseph Jefferson, and even this famous name meant nothing to the rector. He explained that they had come to make arrangements for a funeral. The young man's father, George Holland, had died the night before, and they wished to know if Dr. Houghton would permit the funeral to be held from his church. Dr. Houghton replied that naturally he would, and went on to ask the necessary questions as to hour and arrangements. But before supplying this information, Jefferson announced a little stiffly that it should first be clearly understood that the deceased had been an *actor*. Mildly astonished that this pronouncement should be thought necessary, Dr. Houghton replied that this did not concern him. "I only know that your friend is dead and my services are asked," he replied. The visitors glanced at one another in relief, and arrangements were concluded for a funeral service the following day.

When the black walnut coffin containing the remains of George Holland was brought into the church, it was accompanied by some of the most illustrious players of the time. Joseph Jefferson, whom Dr. Houghton did not recognize, was known from coast to coast for his celebrated portrayal of Rip Van Winkle. It was a role he was to continue to play into the twentieth century. The dead man himself had been a favorite comedian for more than fifty years.

Imagine Dr. Houghton's surprise when he picked up his newspaper a few days later and found himself famous! It was not until then that he understood Jefferson's curious stiffness in announcing that Holland had been an actor, or learned what had preceded the visit to his rectory.

The paper gave the whole story, with scathing editorial comment. It appeared that Mrs. Holland, the dead man's widow, had wished her husband to be buried from the Church of the Atonement, then

at Madison Avenue and Twenty-eighth Street. She and several others of her family sometimes went to that church, and one was even a member. Accordingly, Mr. Jefferson and young Edward Holland went to call on the rector, Rev. William T. Sabine, to make the arrangements. All went smoothly enough, according to Jefferson, until "something, I can scarcely say what, gave me the impression that I had best mention that Mr. Holland was an actor." This was followed by what we of today would call a "slow take." Then came the clergyman's answer, and perhaps we should quote Dr. Sabine himself:

"I said I had a distaste for officiating at such a funeral, and that I did not care to be mixed up in it. I said to the gentleman that I was willing to bury the deceased from his house, but that I objected to having the funeral solemnized at church." What made it even worse to Jefferson at the time, was that the statement was made in front of the dead man's son. "He stood as one dazed with a blow just realized; as if he felt the terrible injustice of a reproach upon a kind and loving father." Jefferson got up to leave, too indignant to make a reply. But he paused at the door, and turning back, asked, "Well, sir, in this dilemma is there no other church to which you can direct me, from which my friend can be buried?"

Dr. Sabine replied, "I believe there is a little church around the corner where they do that sort of thing."

Jefferson bowed. "If that be so, sir," he answered, "God bless the little church around the corner!" And so he and his young friend turned up the street and around the corner to find Dr. Houghton and the Church of the Transfiguration.

Dr. Houghton's reaction to all this sudden publicity was honest amazement at finding himself hailed as a hero for doing what he merely considered his Christian duty. But mainly he was piqued that his beloved church should be referred to as "little." Why, it seated twice as many people as Dr. Sabine's Church of the Atonement!

But this was not the end of the incident; it was only the beginning. Other New York papers picked up the story, and then it was echoed

all over the country. "Sanctimonious Sabine" was one of the mildest epithets hurled at the rector of the Church of the Atonement. He was called a "canting Pharisee," and a narrow-minded bigot who had no right to be preaching the gospel of Christ. He should be unfrocked and driven from the pulpit! To make the matter worse, Sabine refused to make any apology. At the New Year's service, when his church was mobbed by people who came to hear an explanation, he ignored the whole matter—except that he chose a rather puzzling text. It was a passage from Kings: *And as thy servant was busy here and there, he was gone. And the King of Israel said unto him, so shall thy judgment be; thyself hast decided it.* This was interpreted by those present as implying that his judgment should not be questioned, and that the public would do better to get "busy here and there" and go about its business! Even his own parishioners balked a little at that.

Nor was the press the only voice to be raised in loud protest. The actors themselves, scattered though they were throughout the nation, banded together to excoriate Sabine and to "bless the Little Church."

Testimonial performances and public demonstrations were held in places as far apart as San Francisco, Boston, Vicksburg, and Washington, D.C. In New York, every theater in the city was thrown open to pay tribute to the late George Holland, an unprecedented thing. And in Chicago, Crosby's Opera House was so jammed for "The Grand Testimonial to Be Given to the Little Church Around the Corner" that hundreds were turned away, and men waved fifty to seventy-five dollars in the air to bribe the doorman to let them pass through. It amounted to a mania. Soon the public enthusiasm burst into song, and ballads were roared across the footlights and sold on every corner. The most famous of these ballads was entitled "God Bless the Little Church Around the Corner," and was carried into every hamlet and town by the blackface minstrels who were then in their heyday. The piece was standard equipment on every parlor piano for more than a generation, and you will still hear it sung occasionally today.

But the poets!—they were even busier than the writers of ballads. Editors were deluged with unsolicited verse, much of it terrible, but all of it devoted to the same heartfelt refrain: *That Little Church, Ye Priest and Ye Player, The Poor Player at the Gate.* Heaven only knows how many of these homemade compositions went into the wastebasket, but those that were printed would fill a huge scrapbook. And some of them were excellent.

In the wake of all this, came the first flock of tourists.

"Can you tell me where to find the Church of the Transfiguration?" one out-of-towner asked a policeman on the street.

"No, never heard of it."

"Dr. Houghton's church, then?"

"Never heard of that, neither."

"Well—can you tell me where the Little Church Around the Corner is?"

"Oh, *that* church! Twenty-ninth and Fifth Avenue."

And so, to Dr. Houghton's chagrin, his cherished Transfiguration began to be known almost exclusively by the name Dr. Sabine had conferred upon it in a rather condescending manner. As for Sabine himself, he was becoming an embittered and frustrated man. He appears to have been honestly bewildered by the condemnation that assailed him from all sides. He stuck it out for one year, then applied to the diocese to be relieved of his vows. He left the ranks of the Episcopal Church, and later joined the Reformed Episcopal Church, in which he died a bishop. The very Church of the Atonement disappeared from the map. Its congregation was merged with Zion Church uptown, and eventually it became a part of Zion and St. Timothy, where I served as curate.

After all these years, Dr. Sabine's action may well be "forgiven," but it can hardly be forgotten—it is part of a legend. It was only a few years ago that I received a very touching letter from an old lady in California. She identified herself as Dr. Sabine's granddaughter, and said she thought that after three generations, the story might be dropped. I sympathized completely—it is surely hard that the iniquities of the fathers should be visited unto the third genera-

tion in this day and age! Yet every magazine article that appears on the church, every newspaper write-up, tells again of what happened, just as I repeat it here; and I am afraid it is now a little late in the day to try to "kill" the story.

After the funeral of Holland, the actors looked to the Little Church as their particular shrine. They thronged to its services, and now among the Alvords and Roosevelts, the Gerrys and Howlands, could be seen, besides the noble profile of E. H. Sothern, the well-known faces of such popular players as Lawrence Barrett, Lester Wallack, Rose Coghlan, Kitty Chamberlain, Harry Montague, and Mark Smith. With mild surprise, Dr. Houghton might look down from his pulpit on a Sunday morning and see in one part of his church the famous Laura Keene, who had played the lead at Ford's Theatre when Lincoln was shot—and in another part of his church, the somber Edwin Booth, brother of the man who had fired that shot! And in the rows at the back, the Negroes who but yesterday had been runaway slaves. Small wonder if the rector sometimes reflected that God moves in His own and mysterious way!

Then came the day when the actors had a chance to "repay" the Little Church for lifting the stigma from their honored profession. It happened accidentally. Dr. Houghton, in delivering his forty-fourth anniversary sermon, informed his congregation that the church faced a deficit. His disbursements for charity in that year, 1892, had exceeded the sum set aside for the purpose, and the books showed they were $2,300 in the red. He intended this news only for the ears of his parishioners; but an actor who was present wrote a letter to the *Dramatic News,* calling upon his confrères to "come to the aid of the church and raise the necessary money to pay off its debts."

Almost overnight, Dr. Houghton found himself in a most embarrassing position. The appeal for contributions was caught up by other publications, which were shocked that "this good man" should be compelled to make such a statement. "Twenty-three hundred dollars!" they shouted. "Give him twenty-three thousand!" He was forced to write to editors, protesting that he had made no appeal

for outside assistance. No use! Letters poured in from "the profession," enclosing what money their senders could spare, as well as fervent prayers for the well-being of the church. The widow of George Holland sent $300, "a little contribution made up by my sons and myself." And finally the *Dramatic News* turned over the sum of $3,300, "coming from many of the traveling companies in all parts of the United States, as well as from actors and actresses in New York."

Staggered by this overwhelming response, and even more touched by their messages and prayers, Dr. Houghton went into his church one morning at seven, and walked to the altar. "I placed the gift of my friends of the dramatic profession upon the altar in their name and behalf," he wrote in acknowledgment, "invoking the divine blessing upon each one who had any part in the matter." They had given more than was needed, he added—the rest would be used in charitable work.

This was how "the kindly people," as he ever after referred to the players, proved that there was more than lip service in their love of the church. He now knew them all personally. He married them, he buried them, he baptized their children, he sat by their bedsides when they were ill. But no one could get him to go to a theater! He told his parishioners they were quite free to go, always provided they did not neglect their other duties—and even this was "advanced" for his day. But when he himself was asked to honor a performance, even by so gifted a player as Booth, he would politely decline. Someone might need him, he would always object, and not find him at home.

It was not until after his death that anyone clearly understood why Dr. Houghton was so adamant about attending the theater, and then the explanation was found among some biographical notes discovered in his study.

"When a lad of fourteen or fifteen I came to New York," he had written, "having been taught to think, for instance, and verily thinking, that Theatre was only another name for hell, that all who frequented the former would surely find their place in the latter.

"I had a cousin some years my senior, much more experienced, and not wanting in mischievous ways, to whom by his anxious mother I had very unwisely been held up as an example. We were walking one evening, this cousin and I, along Chatham Street. We came to the entrance of the old Chatham Street Theatre. He stopped and said: 'I dare you to go in.' He had the tickets ready, and in we went. The play was a miserable, low, wretched comedy, and a half-hour sufficed to disgust me with the Piece and the Place.

"A letter was written that night by that cousin to his mother with somewhat this beginning:

" 'Dear Mother: You are forever holding up George Houghton to me as an example, and wishing that I would behave as well as he does. Where do you think I saw him to-night? In the pit of the Chatham Street Theatre!'

"With as little delay as possible, you may be sure, that mother made her way to my mother with that letter and said:

" 'Oh, Sister Fanny! Sister Fanny! I am so sorry for you, so sorry for you. I have never made much account of my James. I knew that he was a bad boy, and I always said so . . . But your George—you thought that he was just about perfect, and you have told me so again and again. But he is going to ruin as fast as ever he can. Who would have thought that he was so sly and deceitful! Here is a letter from my James, and where do you think that he says he saw your George? In the pit of the Chatham Street Theatre! In the pit, in the pit! Oh, Sister!' "

We know that as soon as this Job's Comforter had wept her crocodile tears and departed, Mrs. Houghton sat down and wrote to her son. The reason we know is that her letter, penned on the stiff old-fashioned foolscap of a hundred years ago, was found with his notes. In it this remarkable woman assured her son of her faith and undying love, conjured him "not to turn to the world for enjoyment," but to lean upon his Saviour, and most astonishing feat of all, *forbore from mentioning a word about the theater*! Modern mothers, take note. Of course, she didn't really have to mention the theater. The traces of her tears, together with her anxious post-

script, "Do you need shirts?" accomplished their mission almost at sight. And kept her son from repeating his error for sixty-three years!

Dr. Houghton had always dreamed that someday he would be able to build a lich-gate in front of the church, and he lived to see that last wish come true. A lich-gate is a sort of medieval portal, covered by a roof, under which the bier used to be rested for preliminary prayers, before being carried on into the church. Such gates are still seen occasionally in England, though most of them, having been made of wood, have long since rotted away. In 1896, Mrs. Franklin Delano, the former Laura Astor, donated the money to have the gate built. Her husband, by the way, was the uncle of that Sara Delano who married James Roosevelt—the uncle for whom FDR was named.

The gate, when completed, was a most graceful structure, with open arches all around, and with a green-copper roof that turned upward at the eaves like a Chinese pagoda. Inside the structure was placed a stone drinking fountain—for this lich-gate was more to welcome the living than the dead—and directly facing the entrance was installed a figure of Christ the King, his hand lifted in blessing. This is the statue which seemed to welcome me so warmly when I first saw it in 1906—and it seems to have a particular appeal even to passers-by who never enter the church! Often, as I glance down from my rectory windows I see some person, apparently scurrying to work, stop for a moment before this Christ to bow his head in prayer. And only yesterday, after a very hard rain, I found several layers of newspapers carefully laid out at the foot of the pedestal. I know what it means—some Roman Catholic has knelt before our Christ, and covered the wet pavement to keep his knees dry. Such things make us happy. Under the shadow of the skyscrapers, we have an old-fashioned wayside shrine!

But Dr. Houghton never lived to see his lich-gate consecrated. He had hoped to perform that ceremony on the fiftieth anniversary of the church, which would fall in 1898. In November of '97, however, he went out in a driving rain to make one of his sick calls, and

when he returned he was very ill himself. He went up to his bedroom, breathing quite painfully—and only one hour and a half later, he died. The news stunned his parish. For forty-nine years he had guided the destinies of the Church of the Transfiguration, bringing it from a small back room in a private house to the stature of one of the loveliest and most famous churches in the land. How could they ever do without him?

They carried his body to the church, and from sunup to sundown, people filed past his bier. There were Negroes who still remembered the riots and the Underground Railway; charwomen and porters who had not forgotten his errands to the slums; policemen who knew officially of his many works of charity; and wealthy parishioners who had never needed his material charity, but who had often sought his spiritual comfort. And above all there were the "kindly people" who felt they had lost a guardian angel, as well as a friend.

On the day of the funeral, the street was black outside with those who could not gain entrance to the church. The body was carried out through the lich-gate, so recently completed, and placed in the hearse. And then, with members of The Players, The Lambs, the Twelfth-Night Club, and other theatrical organizations acting as an escort of honor, the Rev. George Hendric Houghton left Transfiguration forever.

He was succeeded by his nephew, Dr. George Clarke Houghton, who served as rector until my time, and of whom I have spoken. So now you can see what the Little Church Around the Corner already stood for in the hearts of people everywhere. There are older churches in America, larger churches in America, but no other with quite this particular and openhearted tradition. It was a tradition I hoped to perpetuate—a most happy assignment.

CHAPTER XI

We Form the Episcopal Actors' Guild—Jane Cowl Teaches Mollie to Smoke—Otto Kahn—Deaconess Jane Hall—An Old Attic and Some Theatrical Souvenirs—George Arliss—The Ida Mulle Legacy—Helen Morrison—Death of Percy Moore.

ONE OF MY FIRST ACTS as rector of the Little Church was to try to strengthen the bonds which for fifty years had held it so dear to the people of the theater. There had been an old Actors' Church Alliance, formed back in the days of Bishop Potter by the Rev. Walter E. Bentley, a clergyman who had once been an actor and who retained a lively interest in the welfare of players.

This Alliance had been headed by George Arliss until the confusion of the First World War, when it had been largely neglected and allowed to fall into disuse. After the war, the old Alliance split into three groups—the Catholic Actors' Guild, organized by Father Talbot Smith, the Jewish Actors' Guild, headed by the well-known theatrical agent, William Morris, and the Episcopal Actors' Guild which I was now forming. The name, I hasten to add, merely implies that the organization is sponsored by the Episcopal Church; in actual practice, it is interdenominational.

Mollie and I launched our plans for the Guild on the basis of hospitality. We went to every first night, every opening of a play,

and after the performance visited backstage and invited the whole cast to the rectory for tea. These teas were regularly scheduled for Sunday and Monday afternoons, and were copiously supplied with food, for we shrewdly figured that feeding an actor is like sprinkling salt on the tail of a bird. Also, to be frank, I had some nostalgic memories of those great free lunches of my Columbia days in the downtown saloons.

So we piled our buffets with platters of chicken, ham, potato salad, smoked fish and cheese, with sandwiches and cookies, fresh fruit and cake, and let nature take its course. Mollie was always a wonderful hostess, never seeming to have any trouble planning a menu or arranging a meal. We served coffee and tea, never any liquor—it was the time of Prohibition anyway—but I doubt if anyone felt the need for anything stronger. An actor moving at his ease among his friends and fellow-workers is an irrepressible and most infectious creature, and soon everybody would be sketching out a scene from a play, telling a joke, singing a song, or even showing off a new dance routine after first rolling back the living-room carpet. We also invited guest stars to come and give an impromptu talk on some phase of the theater; and to say that we all had a wonderful time is a shameful understatement. We had the time of our lives, and practically all the players in New York, employed or unemployed, made a point of popping in and sharing our fun.

But soon word got around in society circles that a raft of celebrities, such as John Drew or Otis Skinner or Miss Jane Cowl, could be met and talked to, *in person*, at the Little Church rectory. My phone began to ring. When I answered, like as not there would be some woman on the line whose name was big news in Cholly Knickerbocker's column, and she would be asking me as humbly as the poor little rich girl if she couldn't come, with a friend, to one of our parties. I usually said yes. I figured that well-fixed admirers were the most useful sort of angels for our members to meet, at least for immediate purposes, and in this I was right. Many a play was backed, many a project financed, from these meetings at the Guild.

Once our teas were opened to society, the curbs along East Twenty-ninth Street started to be packed with shiny limousines, the one belonging to Mr. Otto Kahn being the most conspicuous and taking up the most room. I doubt if he missed a single Monday tea, after his first appearance, and on one occasion he even brought his wife. No small honor that, for Mrs. Kahn usually patronized the "higher arts"—concerts and opera—and rarely condescended to anything so plebeian as the ordinary playhouse.

I'll have a good deal to say about Otto Kahn later on, for I got to know him well. But here is as good a place as any to answer a libel against him which has been often repeated—that he patronized the arts, and indulged in his many philanthropies, for the sake of publicity. This is cruel and unjust. He was a man of great culture, who responded impulsively and emotionally to all that was beautiful and creative in the arts. Time and again I had only to say to him, "So-and-so is extremely talented and may go far, but is in great need of help," to have him open his heart and his purse, without thought of credit or even reimbursement. I don't suppose anyone knows how many young artists, sculptors, actors, and singers were indebted to Otto Kahn for their first big break—surely the ones I know of personally must be a very small percentage. He had no reason to help the Little Church, for he was of another faith, yet in 1931 he personally financed the publication of a handsome and voluminously illustrated book, *Through the Lich-Gate*, by Ishbel Ross, which told the story of the church. The book was a large quarto volume, with dry-point illustrations by Ralph L. Boyer, and so expensively made that it had to sell for twenty-five dollars per copy. Naturally, at that price, it was not a bestseller, and I hate to think how much money he must have dropped on the venture. But to him it was well worth it, for it presented the picture of a beautiful church in a beautiful format. He had always admired the Little Church, he told me, since the days when he had first arrived from Germany in the 1890s, and had lived at the Hotel Seville around the corner. He had been so impressed by its beauty that he had dropped in for a midnight service. There came a time eventually when he even, it seems,

considered becoming a member and being confirmed. But I will come to that later.

From the beginning we knew the Guild had to be a success eventually, because of the character of the people who rallied around us. Among our earliest supporters were Mrs. John Henry Hammond, Mrs. Frederic Pease, Willard Straight, Frank Allen, Mary Van Kleeck, George Gordon Battle, Edward F. Albee, Arthur Hornblower, John Golden, Dan Frohman. Our players included Florence Reed, Edith Wynne Matthison, Ann Harding, Grace Griswold, Everett Butterfield, Reginald Barlow, Albert Phillips, Julia Marlowe, Mr. and Mrs. Frank Gillmore, Walter Hampden, Beryl Mercer, Marjorie Gateson, Lula Vollmer, Otis Skinner, and Lucille Laverne.

Jane Cowl—lovely Jane!—was there from the beginning, and immediately struck up a warm and lasting friendship with my beautiful Mollie. It was quite fascinating, in fact, to watch the two of them together, for they looked almost like sisters. When Jane appeared as Juliet, some trick of make-up seemed to accentuate the resemblance, and many people remarked that she looked more like Mollie than she did like herself!

Jane, offstage and on, was in the grand tradition. To quote Noel Coward, she was "everything a famous theatrical star is expected to be: beautiful, effective, gracious, large-hearted, shrewd in everything but business, foolishly generous, infinitely kind to lesser people of the theater, extremely annoying on many small points, and, over and above everything else, a fine actress." The "small point" on which we found her most annoying was her utter inability to keep an appointment on time. But she could make up for this with the most delicate tact and charming diplomacy. Shortly after our teas began, Jane drew Mollie aside and confided to her gently that many of the ladies would like to smoke but were a little fearful of "lighting up" in a rectory. It was obvious that Mollie herself did not smoke, and they were afraid she might be shocked. (This was 1923, remember, and smoking by women was a very hot and debatable issue.) Mollie *was* shocked—not by the idea of smoking, but at the

thought that she was causing embarrassment to others. She confided to Jane that she had already tried smoking, but found she detested the taste of tobacco. "I'll fix that," Jane assured her, and the next time she came, she presented Mollie with a handsome, gold-ringed cigarette holder that must have been eight or ten inches long! It did the trick nicely. With a holder so conspicuous, Mollie was able to light up in a most ostentatious fashion, and there was visible relief among our female guests. Eventually, of course, she grew to like tobacco and smoked as much as anyone else. But I wonder what her grandfather, old Dean Hoffman, would have said, had he been told that smoking would someday be regarded as a desirable social accomplishment in a clergyman's wife!

By December of that year, we were ready actually to formulate our new organization, the Episcopal Actors' Guild. George Arliss, who had been head of the old Actors' Church Alliance, became our first president. Grant Mitchell was vice-president, and Bishop William T. Manning, then head of the diocese, was honorary president. I personally rejoiced in the triple titles of vice-president, warden, and chairman of the council. All told, there were some eleven other clergymen affiliated with the group in various capacities, and a score or more of prominent players on the council. As I glance over the list today I see names, then famous, which perhaps will mean little to the reader of today—Maclyn Arbuckle, for example. He was a fine character actor who, at the invitation of Bishop Manning, delivered a most imposing sermon at the Cathedral of St. John the Divine on the essential decency of actors and the American stage.

Of course, the effectiveness of a Guild such as ours depends to a large extent on the people who run it; and we were fortunate enough to get Deaconess Jane Harriss Hall for our social director. She was an extraordinary person in character as well as in appearance. She was well into her seventies, with a strong and almost masculine face, and a step as firm as a sergeant's on parade. Yet on top of her white hair, which she wore drawn back plain-Jane-and-no-nonsense, she wore a little peaked deaconess' bonnet which

looked as though it had been designed for Whistler's Mother. Her eyes were very blue, and seemed to bore straight through you, while at the same time her mouth gave a humorous twist that signified she had seen a great deal of human nature, and, between ourselves, rather liked what she had seen. She was one of those rare beings who can get constructively angry in other's people behalf and do something about it—a reformer if you like, but a reformer with a heart.

Originally from Philadelphia, Jane Hall did not even begin her career in social work until the age of forty-five. She then studied to become a deaconess, and was invited by the Rev. Loring W. Batten of St. Mark's In-The-Bouwerie to come to New York and start a young students' club in his parish. She was making the round of her visits one day when she called on a young girl who had come to New York to get an art education. She found the girl living in one of those dilapidated buildings that artists often occupy because they are cheap. The room was bare and unheated, there were no conveniences or comforts, and the place was a firetrap. But what startled Jane Hall was the loaded pistol which lay on the table! "What is that for?" she asked the girl; and the student told her simply that she kept it for protection, for she did not feel safe living alone in such surroundings. That shocked Jane Hall into her first independent action. With the help of money supplied by Mrs. John Henry Hammond, she found an apartment that would house five students and opened what she called the Three Arts Club—a home for young girls who had come to New York to study drama, music, or art. That was the very small beginning of the now famous Three Arts Club, which has branches all over the United States and even in England, and which has provided safe and homelike surroundings for thousands of girls. That done, she also opened the Rehearsal Club for young women working on the stage, a retreat in the theater district where they could come to relax and study between rehearsals and shows.

But even this was just a start. Jane Hall became increasingly aware of the fact that child actors often spent their lives traveling

from town to town in stuffy day-coaches, with no opportunity of going to school and getting even the most rudimentary sort of education. So she established the Professional Children's School, with classes adjusted to theatrical schedules, and with a correspondence system for pupils on the road. How many of our actors and actresses of the present generation, who were raised in the theater, owe their educations to Jane Hall and this school! Obviously, then, it was a great stroke of fortune for the Guild that such a woman came to direct our social program. She was with us until age forced her to give up her daily activities—and even then, she retired to Newark, where she taught in a Sunday school and visited the sick. "I want to die in the traces," she always said; and she almost got her wish, for she was active until two years before her death, at the age of eighty-four.

Guild Hall, which we now set up as the new center of all our activities, was the long attic room over the Bride's Chapel. It was the hall built by Dr. Houghton in 1852 for a Sunday-school room, and like all of his additions, had a picturesque charm. Even today it has the air of a studio garret—perhaps a scene from *La Bohème*—for it has rafters and skylights, quaintly latticed windows, and unexpected niches and corners. Today we have added a kitchen, but have in no way interfered with its old-fashioned grace.

At the far end of the room is a stage, necessarily small, on which we have given many performances over the years. On the stage is a grand piano, once the property of the playwright Frank Allen, who adapted *The Deluge*, a play in which, incidentally, a young actor named Edward G. Robinson showed a great deal of promise. On center wall at the back of the stage, and I must confess in a position of honor, hangs a portrait of myself by the artist Richard Kitchin. Peggy Wood commissioned this painting, which was purchased and contributed to the Guild by the Council. Under the painting stands a majestic old writing table made of heavy carved oak. Many an hour of midnight study this table must have seen, for it belonged to Richard Mansfield, and was given to us by his wife, who often came here for tea.

Spaced around the big room itself are many other relics and souvenirs of the theatrical past. One of the most highly prized, of course, is the rather plain old Victorian secretary that stands against the wall, its glass doors enclosing a well-worn set of Shakespeare in small leather volumes. The desk was used by George Holland, whose death in a sense made the Little Church famous. Not far from it is a full-length mirror which now reflects the whole room, but which once reflected the image of Kate Claxton. And not far from that, behind a glass case, sparkles a crown of rubies and diamonds—not real, of course, but priceless all the same, for it was worn by the regal Modjeska as Lady Macbeth. All the way around the walls is a gallery of playbills, pictures, and autographs—a little museum of the American stage.

But let us go back again to 1924, when the Guild was just organized. We had opened Guild Hall, and had a staff to run it, but we had very little money. We talked of nothing but plans and wonderful projects, but they all seemed to call for substantial amounts of that root-of-all-evil, without which one can do little material good in the world. As we took count of stock, we realized we were rich in only one thing—talent. But that talent included some of the biggest box-office names in the business; so it was inevitable that we should begin to think about giving a benefit. A great Inaugural Benefit, to be held in the fall. A. L. Erlanger offered us his Knickerbocker Theatre, free, for the event. The date we set was November 23, 1924, the Sunday before Thanksgiving; and all summer long we worked toward that evening.

The great DeWolf Hopper was then still living—a personality as much in demand as, let us say, Bob Hope is today. He agreed to serve as master of ceremonies. Aiming for the top, we secured the names of President and Mrs. Coolidge to head our list of patrons. No one expected them to be present, of course, but they lent a certain éclat to the rest of the list, which included such dignitaries as Mrs. Ogden Reid, Mrs. Edward S. Harkness, Mrs. E. H. Harriman, General Cornelius Vanderbilt, and scores of others out of the Social Register.

November came, and on Saturday the twenty-second, the very day before the benefit, it looked as though George Arliss, our president, would not be with us. He and his wife had spent the summer in England, and were returning especially for this Inaugural show. They sailed on the *Berengaria,* which was due to arrive in New York on the Friday. But on Friday, when the liner reached Quarantine, the fog was so thick and the seas so heavy, that the *Berengaria* was forced to drop anchor and wait. She was still waiting as dusk approached on Saturday afternoon, with every prospect of spending the weekend exactly where she was. Then two hundred indignant passengers drew up a petition demanding that the captain send for a boat to take them ashore. Arliss, who was the world's worst sailor and invariably seasick till he reached dry land, must have had an agonizing experience getting over the side of the rolling *Berengaria.* Nevertheless, he and his wife came chugging up the harbor aboard the old ferryboat *Weehawken,* with only the luggage they could carry in their hands. And in spite of all this, "Old English" was on deck for the Inaugural Benefit, dapper as ever, with his monocle polished and every hair in place. The show must go on!

And what a show it was! If I still maintain that that Sunday-night audience was the most dazzling I've ever seen, then you must allow somewhat for the rosy-hued spectacles I was wearing at the time. The whole house was jammed, and everywhere you looked you saw famous faces. Just to name a few who sat this side of the footlights, there were Ethel Barrymore, John Drew, Fay Bainter, Ann Harding, Minnie Maddern Fiske, Cyril Maude, Otis Skinner, Julia Marlowe, Beryl Mercer, David Belasco, Ruth Chatterton, Fred and Adèle Astaire, Mary Pickford and Douglas Fairbanks, Josephine Hull, Jane Cowl, Margalo Gillmore, Helen Chandler, Peggy Wood, Frances Starr, Joseph Schildkraut, Rosamond Pinchot, Otto Kruger, Channing Pollock, Ann Matthews, Miriam Hopkins, Blanche Bates, Eddie Dowling, June Walker—and almost everyone else who wasn't on the road. One after another, DeWolf Hopper presented stars from almost all the current hits on Broad-

way. We had the orchestra from *Kid Boots*, the chorus from *Top Hole*, and the two headliners from *The Passing Show*. We had the beloved Cissie Loftus—what a performer!—giving her hilarious impersonations of other entertainers, some of them present. We had the dainty star, Marilyn Miller, doing her shadow dance and song from the ageless *Peter Pan*, and Sarah Truax, of vaudeville fame, giving her famous monologue, "A Lady at a Prizefight." A young juvenile who was having a spectacular success in the comedy *Pigs* wrote a special sketch for us. The juvenile's name was Wallace Ford, and he later went to Hollywood. Flo Ziegfeld, whose *Follies* were then in their eighteenth consecutive season, sent us three of his stars—Evelyn Law, Tom Lewis, and the one-and-only Will Rogers. For musical numbers, we had Arthur Hartmann, the brilliant violinist, the Russian Cathedral Choir, and a new band that was said to have a great future—the Vincent Lopez orchestra. Valeska Suratt was there, fresh from the circuits, and another great lady and very great trouper, whom we respectfully billed as *Madame* Sophie Tucker!

The next day, when we had counted our receipts and deducted our expenses, we found we were six thousand dollars to the good—a fair amount in those days, and enough to launch the Guild as a going concern.

Among the many projects we had discussed, all costing money, was the permanent endowment of a hospital bed. There was no hospital insurance or Blue Cross in those days, and the specter of illness was a nightmare to actors. Daniel Frohman, the producer who for thirty-seven years directed the Actors' Fund, explained it all very well when he said: "The tragic difficulty in the dramatic profession is that the rank and file have no stable or fixed season of employment. They sometimes rehearse in plays from four to six weeks, and these sometimes end their existence after three or four weeks of exploitation, or after brief periods: then the long wait in securing further work. This often brings in its train many hardships, frequently sickness, and other distressing disabilities, because the

precarious character of the amusement profession does not permit, as in other walks of life, the saving of money against the time of need."

I felt that a hospital bed, at the disposal of actors and their families, was one of the most useful things the Guild could provide, and I urged the point strongly. But Arliss, as president, firmly opposed it. For some reason I never understood, he hated the very thought of hospitals and doctors. Though he was invariably a gentleman in all his dealings, he could be as cold as ice upon occasion, and on the occasions when this matter was under discussion, he was positively glacial. Instead of a hospital bed, he wanted us to set up a "hostel" for the children of actors who were off on the road. Hostels, of course, are popular in England, as they are all over the Continent, and he could never understand why they should not be transplanted to America. Maybe they should, but the Professional Children's School was already in existence, and other schools were gradually meeting this problem. By the time we were in a fiscal position to undertake such a hostel, the need for it had passed, and so we turned our activity in other directions.

Incidentally, Arliss' dislike of doctors and hospitals was a curious quirk which, in the end, cost him a title! It has long been the tradition in England to confer knighthoods on distinguished players, as witness Sir Beerbohm Tree, Sir Henry Irving and, in these later years, Sir Cedric Hardwicke and Sir Laurence Olivier. Arliss cherished the hope that he too might be honored in this way—he surely deserved it—and I championed his cause by writing a letter to the Bishop of London. Naturally we both knew that the candidate for knighthood customarily makes a return for this honor: a contribution to be paid to some worthy cause or charity, to be named by the Crown. Arliss was quite prepared to do the thing handsomely—until we were informed that Queen Mary would appreciate a donation to a certain new hospital! Her pet philanthropy, it appeared, was medical care. Arliss again turned to ice and absolutely refused. No argument could sway him; and naturally, since there was no reply from this side of the water, there was silence from England. He

never did get his knighthood, and knowing how much it meant to him, I can only say he was a man of his convictions. If he was stiff-necked and stubborn, he was also incorruptible; and even when you disagree with a man like that, you have to admire him for sticking to his guns.

We still keep open house each day at the Guild, Saturdays excepted; and every afternoon at four we still serve tea. Candles are lighted to give a glow to the room, sandwiches and cakes are laid out by the hostess of the day—we alternate this responsibility over the month, to lighten the work—and the guests include youngsters and veterans, laymen and professionals from the allied fields. One and all they talk shop, discussing plays and casting, producers and agents, hit-runs and flops, summer stock and television, and all the things actors talk about as soon as they get together. It is all spontaneous, unrehearsed, and completely off-the-cuff, with the exception perhaps of the "guest star," some performer of note who comes to make a speech. Often newcomers here make valuable contacts, or hear about openings, or form lasting friendships for the years to come.

Among the extra added attractions now offered by the Guild is a class in sewing on Mondays—it is so useful, we have found, for aspiring young actresses to know how to make their costumes, and frequently their own clothes! Once a month the card-playing members set up the tables for a workout at bridge, with prizes, and during the winter the Young People's Workshop offers practical training in acting techniques. Peggy Wood, one of our most ardent supporters, conducted this course for the first two seasons; now her television work in the series "Mama" demands her full time.

But the social aspect, important as it is, is only a part of the work of the Guild. Leading off the Hall, and down three small steps, is a tiny cubicle under the eaves—our executive office. Here, for thirty years, all our business has been conducted. Here too are heard the heart-wringing stories of the break that doesn't come, of the rent that's overdue, of the sickness at home, of the loan that is needed

till rehearsals begin. We are not set up for large-scale relief like the Actors' Fund, but because we are small, we can often move swiftly and without red tape. We never, by the way, ask a person's religion or even whether he belongs to the Guild. It is enough to know he is a member of the acting profession, and that he is not being assisted by one of the allied Guilds—a fact we can quickly ascertain by phone. Then, if we feel the help is genuinely needed, we move in at once.

Often we are asked if these loans are repaid. Frequently, yes. Actors are as honest as any other people, and they pay when they can. Sometimes they can't, and in the case of the aged we know in advance that repayment is unlikely, and even impossible. However, in one such case we found that the bread we cast upon the waters was not only returned to us—but came back buttered!

It was 1934, and deep in the Depression. One of the members of our Council was Ida Mulle, once a famous singing star, and the toast of Broadway in the eighties and nineties. She had been the prima donna in the American premiere of *Orpheus,* and had later appeared in silent movies with Norma Talmadge. Her career had spread well over half a century, from her first appearance as Little Buttercup at the age of nine, to her last appearance with Blanche Yurka in *The Squall.* As we knew her at the Guild, she was a fragile little woman well past her three-score and ten, but still indefatigable in her love of the theater.

One day our phone rang—Ida Mulle had had a bad fall while trying to go through a revolving door, and was in critical condition. Percy Moore, who was then our executive secretary, lost no time in getting to Ida Mulle to see what we could do. He arranged for her to be placed in a hospital, saw to it that she received the best of medical care, and took charge of all arrangements. During the three months she lingered before her death, she was visited constantly by members of the Guild, and after she died we brought her to the church for burial.

That would normally have been the end of the story—the end of many similar stories I could tell. But nine years later, in 1945, we

were notified that friends of Ida Mulle had left us a legacy! Our unexpected benefactors were a Mr. and Mrs. Edward F. Cole. Mrs. Cole had known Ida Mulle for many years, and she and her husband had been so touched by the care the Guild extended in this case that they had each agreed to name us in their wills. Together, the legacies amounted to forty thousand dollars. It is by far the largest donation the Guild has ever received, before that or since, and it enabled us to expand our activities greatly. Ordinarily, we never reveal the names of those we have helped; but since Ida Mulle helped *us* to such an extent, I am sure she would be proud to have her story told.

Though the Guild has given financial assistance in hundreds of cases, the help we are proudest of is the sort that draws mainly on quick human sympathy, plus an infinite willingness to take time and pains.

Not long ago a character actress who could no longer support herself in the theater, came to us with her problem. She had an opportunity to take over a flat that could easily be converted into a theatrical rooming house. She felt that if she could do this, if she could only run a pleasant home for others in the profession, she could more readily be resigned to giving up the stage. But alas, the flat as it stood was only partially furnished, and she did not have the money or the credit to make the place comfortable—what could she do? Our executive secretary, Mrs. Helen Morrison, drew up a list of the furnishings most urgently needed, then she turned to the phone. She called up everyone who might have furniture to contribute, with the result that we collected linens, curtains, tables, rugs, and even blankets and beds. The whole thing cost the Guild no more than a few extra telephone calls, the moving men's fees, and one month's rent; yet a woman was enabled to set herself up in a business she liked and make a secure and adequate living.

Sometimes the Guild acts as foster employer. The elderly widow of a one-time producer, a woman who had spent many years in the theater, was left without income when her husband died. She was rather too old to go out and get a job, so we put her on pension.

Her immediate problem was solved, but she faced the tragedy of so many old people—the feeling of not having a function in life. She wanted to work. We learned of an institution which badly needed the services of someone equipped with a knowledge of the theater, but which had no funds available to pay for the job. We got the two together. Now the lady reports regularly to work that she loves, "donating" her services, and we foot the bill. Why insist on calling it *charity*, when *salary* is a much sweeter word to the ears?

One of Mrs. Morrison's pet projects is her Wardrobe of Windfalls. "Nothing to wear" is no joke at the Guild. An actress who is doggedly making the rounds of casting offices and agencies may skip a few meals and console herself that it is good for her figure; but how can she console herself about her clothes, when they blurt out to everyone their own true age, and *her* financial condition? No, if the apparel oft proclaims the man in ordinary life, consider how loudly it informs on the out-of-work player!

To help solve this problem, the Guild collects clothing of all types and sizes, for both men and women. We pick up gladly from anyone who is kind enough to give us a call. The bundles are sorted and carefully cleaned. If genuine antiques turn up in the sorting—such interesting curios as derbies, silk hats, hobble-skirts or spats—they are passed on to the Academy of Dramatic Art, to help supplement their collection of theatrical costumes. But the still presentable things such as suits and coats, or that "last year's little model that is still as good as new," are mended, pressed, put in pristine condition, and then hung up for display in the Windfall Wardrobe. There they await a "customer"—which, in our vocabulary, means anyone who needs it, and whom it will fit.

Sometimes, if the right customer is slow in appearing, Mrs. Morrison and her helpers hold what they call a "casting session." They bring the garment out for concentrated study—may even ask someone to put it on and model it for them—then they ask one another, "Whom does it look like?" Eventually the color, size, and cut of the thing suggests a likely owner, and they get on the phone. "We have a Windfall here that we think was just made for you," they

happily announce. "Would you drop in and see it?" Their eye is so good that they have never, thus far, miscast a garment.

Once in a while, of course, we strike a real bonanza. I could mention a very respectable gray-haired lady who is wearing a handsome fur coat that is far beyond her means. There is nothing scandalous in the way she obtained it—it was one of our Windfalls! The coat originally came to us from a well-to-do patroness who apologized for the fact that she had worn off the fur, just under the left arm, to practically a bald spot; that was the side on which she carried her purse. Maybe, she suggested, we could have the thing repaired. We made inquiries, but found that repairs on a fine silver broadtail would be fairly expensive; so the coat was hung away in the wardrobe where it remained for some time, unclaimed and unwanted.

Then one day the gray-haired lady I have mentioned walked into the Guild. She had come on other business, with no intention of asking for help. However, Mrs. Morrison by now has developed a fairly quick eye for signs of obsolescence, and she couldn't help noticing that the coat this lady wore, though it had once been a good one, had seen better days. She began to do some mental "casting." Surely, that silvery hair would look well, set off by silver broadtail! With all the wiles of a diplomat bringing the subject around to some delicate point, she began to talk about furs; then, at the psychological moment, she produced the coat. It was love at first sight! But wait a minute—*caveat emptor*—how about the bald spot? Even that failed to discourage this satisfied customer, for she had an inspiration. She took both coats, the one she was wearing as well as the broadtail, to a furrier's shop, and there she struck a bargain to have the "new" one repaired, by trading in the old.

Oh, the stories I could tell about the Guild and its people are endless! But I cannot end the chapter without a special salute to the memory of Percy Moore. He was the man I mentioned as going to the aid of Ida Mulle, and was our executive secretary for eighteen years.

Percy Moore was already a well-known actor, and a member of

both The Players and The Lambs, when he came with us in 1927. He took over the work of Rexford Kendrick, our first executive secretary, who left us that year for another post. Moore had acted with E. H. Sothern, and in Shakespeare and Shaw. He knew all about actors and their problems firsthand, was simply inexhaustible in his efforts to help them, and was devoted to the Guild. Yet somehow, in spite of all his daily activities, he found the time and energy to carry on his acting, and there was hardly a season that he did not appear on the Broadway stage. He was in *The Cat and the Canary*, *A Slight Case of Murder*, *The Man Who Came to Dinner*, and many other hits.

It was Percy Moore's habit every afternoon to go up to Guild Hall just before the four o'clock service, then come down into the church to take up the offering. I was conducting the service on April 8, 1945, when I noticed uneasily that Percy had failed to come down. His wife, Helen, a talented actress and a very charming young woman, was in the congregation, and I could see that she too was beginning to worry, for she kept glancing toward the door. After a while, someone went upstairs to investigate, and the next thing I knew I was handed a note, as I stood in the chancel, telling me that Percy had apparently suffered a stroke, and was lying unconscious up there on the floor!

A doctor was sent for, while I concluded the service as quickly as I could, and got the church emptied. But when the doctor arrived, it was already too late; Percy Moore was dead.

We buried him with all of the honors accorded an actor and a servant of the church. But after the funeral, when things quieted down and began to get back to normal, we were faced with the problem of who would carry on his work. The person who knew most about it was his young wife, Helen. We asked her if she would take over for the time being, until we could find someone else—we thought that, besides helping us, it might serve to take her mind off her sorrow. She readily agreed—and today, how could we ever function without her? It's been twelve years since she stepped into the Guild office to "help us out for a few months, or a year at the

most," and she is still on the job—like Mary Hanlon before her. She has run things with such efficiency, such warmth and understanding, that the Guild has flourished and its membership increased. I have no doubt that much of this increase can be traced directly to the confidence and enthusiasm she manages to inspire; and I am happy to say that when she married again just a few years ago, and became the wife of Dr. William Wallace Morrison, one of our vestrymen, she did not think of retiring.

I have never seen anything like Helen Morrison's uncanny sense in picking hit plays—she is almost infallible—and she has used this rare ability to our great advantage. Women in business? I can say without hesitation that the Guild has reached the peak of its usefulness and strength with a woman at the helm.

CHAPTER XII

A Triumvirate of Women—Mabel Gerry—Julia West—Valerie Hadden—Kathryna Is Born—Thanksgiving Candles—Jubilee and Christening—Martha's Vineyard—Isabelle Enters Our Lives—The Rector's Fruitcake

I WAS MOST FORTUNATE, in my first years at Transfiguration, in having the support of three of the most influential women in the parish. Mollie and I always referred to them, between ourselves, as the Triumvirate.

The first of these was Mabel Gerry, a cousin of Mollie's on the Hoffman side, and a constant visitor at the rectory. She was the younger daughter of Elbridge T. Gerry, a prominent member of the Little Church under the two Dr. Houghtons, and founder of the Gerry Society—or what is known today as the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children.

Mabel's grandfather, on her father's side, had been the first Elbridge T. Gerry, governor of Massachusetts during the War of 1812, and later vice-president under James Madison. He it was who first thought of carving up an election district—hence the term *gerrymander*. On her mother's side, Mabel's grandmother had been a sister to Dean Hoffman's mother, and through this connection she had benefited from Hoffman real-estate holdings, including,

among other things, the piece of land on which Stern Brothers' department store now stands. These properties, together with legacies from the Lewises, the Livingstons, the Gerrys and Verplancks, made Mabel a very wealthy lady indeed.

But I must say that the Gerrys had a high sense of public responsibility along with their money. Commodore Gerry, in addition to founding the Gerry Society, built an uptown chapel which for many years was part of the parish of Transfiguration—St. Edward the Martyr on East One-hundred-ninth Street. It was one of the most perfect chapels ever designed, a thing of sheer beauty. Today it is in the heart of a Puerto Rican colony, and a Puerto Rican clergyman has it in charge.

Mabel herself was personally active in a great many charities. She kept a very strict accounting, right to the penny, of all the money she spent on herself in the course of the year, and then gave an exactly equal amount to the church and her other philanthropies. I could not begin to estimate how much we owed, at the Little Church, to her open-handedness and natural generosity. When I took over, we needed all sorts of things—a new organ, a new roof, and a lengthy list of expensive repairs. It was with Mabel's help that we made our improvements.

As the Commodore got older, Mabel took over many of her father's functions with the Gerry Society. She was very fond of children, almost foolishly fond. Also she was fond of bangles and jewelry. She was always bringing classes of children down to me to be instructed for confirmation, and she would sit aside quietly while I went through the lessons. When she thought I had gone on long enough, however, she would begin to get restless and the dozens of bracelets she wore on her arms would set up a tinkling. I always knew when I heard that jingle-jangle that it was time to wind up the instruction and quit.

Mabel did not marry until well into her thirties, and then she married F. E. Saxham Drury, an Englishman whose family had given its name to Drury Lane. He was a splendid person, really, but so British in manner that old Commodore Gerry, who by then

was well into his dotage, always mistook him for a new English butler.

One of the organizations Mabel helped support was the New York Altar Society, which had been founded by the second member of our Triumvirate, Julia Nelson West. Mrs. West had formed the society years before, when she had learned of the deplorable condition of the chapels in the Tombs, and had resolved that something must be done to furnish a more fitting place for the celebration of the Holy Eucharist. She and a few devoted friends got together and provided suitable vestments and holy vessels for the prison. Then they discovered there was no provision for mass aboard the ships carrying tourists from England to America. They undertook to remedy this—an enormous task when you realize that, in addition to holy vessels and furnishings, each boat had to have four complete sets of vestments, green for Trinity, white for Easter and Christmas, purple for Lent, and red for the martyrs and Pentecost. The local Altar Society at each church was asked to choose its own contribution. Ours at the Little Church was to raise the money for the silver vessels, the chalice, the cruets, the paten and lavabo. All the English boats were supplied, and all the American, so that any priest of the Episcopal faith could hold Communion at sea. I myself have many times celebrated mass while crossing the Atlantic, using the furnishings supplied by the Society.

The third member of the Triumvirate was Valerie Buckhardt Hadden, a fine-looking woman whose coal-black hair remained untouched, and I mean untouched, until far into her seventies. She had a Penelope-like passion for working with her needle, and I never visited her huge house uptown, whatever the hour, without finding her seated at her tapestry frame, working out some needlepoint design. She was quite an artist at this half-forgotten art, and the fine scarlet cushions which still serve as knee-pads around our communion rail testify to the excellence of her work. I think she also made a set of such pads for the American Cathedral at Paris.

It was due to her love for fine embroidery and lace that I still,

long after her death, have one of the finest albs in existence, to wear when I celebrate mass on Easter or other high holy days. It seems that in 1897, when Valerie was young and New York was very gay, she had attended the fabulous Bradley Martin ball held at the Waldorf. That ball was in the form of an historical pageant, with footmen in pale blue and gold opening the doors of the carriages, and Valerie had gone as one of the better-dressed mistresses of Louis XV. The ball was so splendid and so costly that it was denounced the following Sunday by Dr. William S. Rainsford, from his pulpit at St. George's in Sixteenth Street. He called it "an orgy of extravagance, a disgrace to the town." I wonder what he would say now if he could see me celebrating special masses in an alb made of one of the petticoats worn at that ball! It is Valerie's underskirt, lavishly embroidered with openwork and lace executed by French nuns, and which she kept laid away all those years in blue paper, until she happened to notice that I could use a new alb. She then took it to an ecclesiastical tailor, had it made up into the regulation white tunic, and presented it to me. It is the most beautiful thing I ever have worn, and I am most grateful to Valerie, and to the Bradley Martin "orgy." But for that matter, we are apt to be a little impious here where beauty is concerned. We have a caul, for example, which we drape over the Processional Cross on Good Friday, to show mourning for Our Lord. That caul is a bit of authentic mourning veil, having once been worn by my mother. We found it among her effects after she died, and it was such a gossamer thing, of such fine English crape, that we could not bear to waste it. It is consecrated now to the use of the church, and adds its own touch of beauty to Lent.

Another woman, who was not part of the Triumvirate but who was very active in those early days, was Edwyna Bridgman. She was the widow of the Rev. Charles DeWitt Bridgman, who had had a New York parish for a good many years. After his death she had had the tact and understanding to leave his parish entirely. She did this for the sake of the incoming rector and his wife, for she realized

that the parishioners, having been accustomed to come to her for so many things, might continue to do so. In this respect, a clergyman's widow is like a dowager queen.

Mrs. Bridgman associated a great deal with Valerie Hadden and Julia West, and was deeply involved in most of their enterprises, but her most intimate friend was Ella Milbank, founder of the Christian Women's Union. It was this Union which, with the help of the Milbank fortune, had established the five or six clubs for young working women which still function so usefully in New York, and which are regarded as models of their kind. When Mrs. Milbank died, Mrs. Bridgman became practically a second mother to her children.

What Mrs. Bridgman most enjoyed was standing at the front door of Transfiguration on a fine Sunday morning and greeting the people as they came and went. This was what she had done for her husband's congregation, and we were delighted to have her assist, for she had a very winning way. She missed hardly a Sunday up to her death in 1930; and for years afterward, people would ask us, "What has become of that charming lady who used to stand at the door?" She is gone, but one of the four archangels who guard the doors of St. Joseph's Chapel stands in memory of Edwyna Benedict Bridgman.

The year 1924 opened for us most auspiciously. We were to have a baby—Mollie was to have a baby. We were so thrilled that we shared the news with everyone, and of course we were deluged with well-meant advice. Mabel Gerry, who was so wild about children, acted as though the project were her own.

"I'm so excited!" she told Mollie. "Do you realize this will be the first child born here in the rectory?"

"What do you mean, in the rectory?" Mollie exclaimed. "Why, this baby will be born in the middle of August."

That was all right with Mabel. She was perfectly sure we could get enough fans to keep the rectory cool, and with nurses and doctors we could turn the third floor into practically a maternity ward. But Mollie was adamant. *"Nothing,"* she assured us, "would induce

me to have a baby in New York in August, when I can go to the country." And to the country we went.

Mrs. Watson had found a beautiful summer place in Pittsfield, Massachusetts, belonging to Judge John W. Crosby. He was going to Europe, and was willing to rent us Westlands for the season. We all moved up there—Mollie and I, the two mothers, and a nurse, Miss Staniforth, whom Mollie's brother, Major Watson, had sent us on loan, so to speak, for the great occasion. She was an especially valued family servant and had to be returned, when the emergency was over, like a piece of rare china.

All summer we took long, enjoyable drives in the Watson limousine—the chauffeur driving, I assure you, for we were taking no chances with me at the wheel. There was a little French church nearby which I often visited. It was a Roman Catholic church, but I always felt welcome there, and would kneel before the Blessed Sacrament and pray.

Of course, like all young parents, we spent hours on the all-important question of a name. "If it's a girl," we finally decided, "we'll call her Kathryna. Kathryna Hoffman Ray." There had been many Kathrynas, or Katrinas, in the Hoffman, Van Cortlandt, and Verplanck families, all of whom were Dutch. If it was a boy, we thought, we would probably call it Randolph. But actually, we hardly gave a thought to its being a boy, and always spoke of the child as Kathryna.

Pittsfield is not very far from Stockbridge, where we had a number of friends also spending the summer. Mollie was doing so well that Mrs. Watson decided we might as well have the *accouchement* at home. All arrangements were made with the local doctor, a very competent man, and the whole upper floor was made over, with nursery and medical quarters, until it seemed like the wing of a hospital. Now there was nothing to do but await the newcomer's pleasure. Mollie, as usual, showed the most extraordinary calm, never being worried or disturbed, and not even in pain until the last few hours. Hers was the most serene nature I ever have known.

August arrived and wore on very slowly, the way time drags

when a birth is expected. Then, on August twentieth, the skies turned black, the wind blew with gale force—and Mollie began to feel her first labor pains. It seemed impossible that the doctor could reach Westlands in weather like that, and I was pacing the floor downstairs while Miss Staniforth walked Mollie upstairs in the corridor. The calm one now, astonishingly enough, was Mollie's mother who kept assuring me that the storm would blow over and the doctor would get there in time.

She was right. Sometime before midnight that night, I heard the first bawl of my newborn child as the doctor slapped the breath into her lungs—Kathryna had arrived!

I hurried in to see her, just as soon as they would let me in through the door. But at the first look, my face fell. "Is there anything wrong with her?" I asked. "Just look at her head!" She was red as a beet, and her head was flattened at the sides and came to a point on top.

Miss Staniforth sniffed at me. "This is one of the most *perfect* babies I have ever seen!" she said haughtily, and swept her away to put her in her crib. I was properly squelched.

But the first thing I did, very early next morning, was to go down to the little French church where I had said so many prayers. In front of the Blessed Sacrament was a large candle stand with about three dozen candles. I lighted them all, then placed twenty-five dollars on the stand. One of the sisters came in while I was doing this, and looked in amazement at the man who had lighted so many candles. When I had finished making my thanksgiving, I stopped for a word with her.

"I've seen you coming in every day," she said pleasantly. "Has your petition been answered?"

"Most completely," I answered, pointing to the money on the stand. "And here is my offering." Her eyes widened when she saw so much money, for it was a very poor church—and I was happy to know that my good fortune would bring a little happiness to others. People sometimes ask why "thanksgiving offerings" should be made, and candles lighted, and "all that sort of nonsense." I can only say that handing on a little something to the poor is the least

way in which we can express our gratitude to God for some special blessing. When we don't express our gratitude, we soon cease to feel it.

Then I went home and had some coffee, and began to send telegrams. The first reply I got was, of course, from John Drew, who was always so punctilious. And the second was from Evangeline Adams. Would I send her the moment of birth so she could start casting a horoscope at once? It was never too soon.

When September came, I commuted back and forth so that Mollie and Kathryna could remain in the country. Mollie was able, as her strength returned, to attend the music festivals at Stockbridge, and to go for long drives. I kept a bachelor establishment during the week and saw a lot of my old-time friends, especially Bert Wise.

Transfiguration was seventy-five years old that year, on the last Sunday in October, and naturally this called for great celebration. The church was elaborately decorated in a way that would have delighted the old rector's heart. Special music was arranged, and there was a brilliant list of church dignitaries who were to join us at our service. Then at the eleventh hour on Saturday night, the day before the celebration, I received a telephone call telling me that a man I knew only by name had died, and his relatives wished to know if they could place his body in our mortuary chapel to await its burial on Monday.

My first impulse was to say, "I'm sorry, it's impossible at this time," for the chapel opens directly into the nave of the church. But then I took second thought. Why, this was exactly what the chapel had been built for! How empty our own rejoicing would seem, if we refused haven to those who had asked us for refuge! So I said yes, and late that very night the body was placed in the chapel, with vigil candles burning, and we drew our red velvet curtains across the grille doors to conceal it from view.

The next day thousands of people thronged into the church, masses were sung, commemorative sermons delivered from the pulpit, chants and oratorios rendered by our splendid boys' choir, and no one suspected the presence of the quiet form resting there just

behind the velvet curtains. But I was aware of it, and to me it was the most beautiful and significant part of the day. *In the midst of life we are in death.* In the seventy-five years since Transfiguration had been built, more than twenty-five thousand funerals had been held from these premises, and it seemed only fitting that the dead should join us in our celebration. Here again was the stranger at our gates, almost exactly as George Holland had been a stranger at our gates so many years before. It was like a testing of our spirit, to see if we had changed or forgotten of our charity, and I was grateful that I had remembered in time.

No sooner was this Jubilee over, than it was time for our small daughter's christening. Mollie had chosen November 6 for this, for that was her own birthday. Bishop Manning was coming down to officiate, arriving a little early so he could first confirm a young lady in the chapel. Our baptismal font is in a recess off the Chapel of the Holy Family, or chantry, and the pews were filled with members of both families and with family friends. The star of the occasion, our tiny Kathryna, was dressed in a charming old-fashioned christening gown that had been handed down the generations, like the veil Mollie had worn at our wedding. Her godparents were Mollie's brother, Major Watson, who had come from California, and Margaret Hoffman, a first cousin of Mollie's. The second godmother was Edith Wise, wife of my friend Bert Wise—the young lady who, you remember, had introduced me to Mollie.

The following summer we spent in Martha's Vineyard. Robert Candler, who was a member of the Vestry, and his wife, Ethel, had a summer place in the little fishing town of Edgartown, right on the water. They suggested that we rent a house on the main street there, one that was available all furnished, and so we made arrangements by mail. The house, we were told, had always belonged to this one old fishing family, so we were quite excited over the prospects of enjoying a real Cape Cod atmosphere—pine furniture, calico curtains, and probably a whale-oil lamp up over the mantel.

What a jolt we were in for! The furniture was all secondhand and

looked as though it had just been picked up at the Salvation Army. The one "authentic" touch was a row of fishermen ancestors who glowered down at us from the wall, all horribly executed in schoolroom crayons. Our first act was to haul these down and hide them in a closet. Then Mollie got busy, with the help of the two maids we had brought, and made the place halfway livable for the summer.

The house was exactly on the sidewalk. The only place for Kathryna's playpen was on the front porch, and that was so close to the street that passers-by always stopped to pet and admire her. One such admirer was bending over the playpen one morning when Mollie stepped out on the porch, and she introduced herself as Mrs. Price Post. She had a house there in Edgartown and invited us over. We went to a number of her afternoon parties, meeting throngs of interesting people, and Mollie and I were always impressed with the ease with which Mrs. Post entertained. Everything was perfectly ordered and went off without a hitch—but we were not so surprised when we learned that Mrs. Post's first name was Emily . . . Emily Post.

Edgartown is a great yachting basin, and thanks to our neighbors, we did a lot of sailing. On one side of us lived a shoe manufacturer who owned his own cabin cruiser, and on the other side lived the Dinsmores, who quickly adopted us. The Dinsmores had a cousin who kept showing up with a tremendous yacht almost the size of a liner, and she often took us out for a day or two of sailing. She was Mrs. Vincent Astor.

Mollie, who was always so good at water sports, reveled in all the swimming and boating, while I built castles in the sand for Kathryna. But it was a lonesome life, I am afraid, for our servants, for as soon as we got back to the city they both gave us notice. They were young English girls who had failed, in our environment, to find "young men to walk out with," and they were going back to London.

For once in her life, Mollie was upset. A sixteen-room rectory had to be opened and made ready for all the entertaining we did in connection with the actors, and her own Thursday Night Club. This latter was a group of young men and women, about one hundred

and fifty strong, which Mollie had organized, and which brought together those who were interested in the arts, especially music. There was one young girl particularly, in this group, of whom Mollie and I became extremely fond, and who was always popping in and out at odd hours. When she finally got a small part in a Broadway play, we attended the opening with as much pride as though she had been our own daughter. She was an ashen blonde whose young and delicate beauty was absolutely breathtaking. Her name was Ann Harding.

It was Owen, our night watchman, who finally solved the servant problem for us. About this time he came to Mollie and asked her assistance in finding a job for a Scotswoman. She had come to America only because her sister had come here before her, and so far she had been working on an estate up in Westchester. But as a servant brought up in the household of the Archbishop of York, she could not adjust herself to secular ways. She was most desirous, Owen said, of finding a post with some clergyman, Anglican preferred, and could we help her to locate a place?

That is how we found Isabelle Aynsley, that domestic jewel who presided over our kitchen for more than three decades. Not only was Isabelle the queen of all cooks, but she even adored having company, and the sudden announcement that we were expecting more people for dinner brought nothing but a wider smile to her face. She loved feeding people and watching them eat; but the most gratifying sight of all, in her eyes, was a room full of gentlemen of the cloth, all stirring their tea, and all reaching simultaneously for one more slab of her wonderful fruitcake. This she called "The Rector's Fruitcake"—in honor of what rector we never found out—but it was as full of plums as Jack Horner's pie and became justifiably famous. I suppose it is not the sort of cake you would want to whip together every day, being a bit on the rich side, but if you go to a little extra trouble for the holidays, I am sure you will find "The Rector's Fruitcake" as delectable as I say. Isabelle very kindly parted with the recipe for inclusion in the last part of this book. Other of her masterpieces as well are in the final chapter.

CHAPTER XIII

Clara Morris Is Buried in a Pink Kimono—A Stained-glass Window to Rip Van Winkle—the Kate Claxton Mirror—A Theory of Vibrations and Some Unforgettable Visitors

CLARA MORRIS died that November of 1925. She had been Augustin Daly's most illustrious star, a great tragedienne of the eighties and nineties. When she staggered out into the snow in *East Lynne* there was not a dry eye in the house; and they said her Camille was not inferior to Bernhardt's. She was somewhat short of eighty when she died, and had not appeared on a stage for twenty years. This was partially due to ill health—she suffered from rheumatism—but equally, it was said, to an obsession that the public should remember her as she had looked in the days of her prime.

I was tremendously touched when I looked into her coffin. Though her hands were old and wrinkled, her face was still smooth, and she looked thirty or forty years younger than she was. Her make-up man had done a wonderful job for her on this final assignment, and her youthfulness was emphasized by the fact that she was garbed in a pink silk dressing-gown embroidered with flowers and blue butterflies! This had been done at her special request, for she hated the gloom and lugubriousness of funerals.

Her body was brought to the chapel the day before the funeral,

and so lonely did this poor woman look lying there as though bedecked for a last curtain call, that I could not resist sending out and buying her some orchids. I placed the sheaf of orchids on top of the casket, where they caught the attention of a reporter who dropped around later for a routine story. The reporter mentioned the orchids as being the only flowers received by a woman who had once been handed fields of bouquets across the footlights—and within an hour of the time the paper hit the street, we were deluged! Messengers arrived from every florist in town, until the casket between its tall burning tapers was nearly smothered with pink chrysanthemums and late autumn flowers.

Next day, when the services were held, two thousand people tried to get into the church. I read the beautiful service for the dead from the Book of Common Prayer, assisted by the Rev. Frederick A. Wright, who was pastor of the Tuckahoe church where Miss Morris had attended in her later years. Alma Clayburgh, former Metropolitan star, sang the Recessional, and among those who filed past the bier were Robert Mantell, Gilbert Emery, Nellie Revell, and Grace Griswold. Two generations of professionals had come to pay their last respects. As the body left the church, borne by such eminent pallbearers as David Warfield, Thomas Meighan, Frank Gillmore, and Otis Skinner, I felt it was rather too bad that the clapping of hands is out of order at funerals. Miss Morris had once told Dan Frohman that she regarded applause as "the sweetest sound in the world," and I think she would have regarded a final handburst as a more welcome tribute, even, than the mountains of flowers. At any rate, hers was the first great theatrical funeral to be held at the Little Church in my time, and because of the pink silk dressing-gown, which made all the headlines, it was fairly spectacular.

Earlier that year, the Episcopal Actors' Guild unveiled its fine memorial window to Joseph Jefferson, the first man to call Transfiguration the Little Church Around the Corner. The design, based on the story of the Good Samaritan, was suggested by the director, Walter Wilson, but was executed in England. Jefferson's daughter had married an official of the British Museum, and he engaged the

Whitefriars studio of James Powell and Sons to translate Wilson's conception into glass. The artists worked at it for months, and the finished product was so unusual, and so fine an example of the glassworker's art, that it was exhibited in London before being sent over, and King George and Queen Mary went to view it.

The window was installed in our south wall, but kept covered with curtains, and then we invited Jefferson's great-granddaughter, Lauretta Jefferson Corlett, to do the unveiling. The ceremony was held in the late afternoon, when most actors could get there, and was one of our most memorable events.

John Drew delivered the euology, recalling that he had played with Joe Jefferson in *Rip Van Winkle* when he was a young man being broken into the stage tradition of his family. Charles A. Stevenson, who had known both Jefferson and George Holland in his youth, told of Dr. Sabine's churlish refusal to bury an actor, and expressed his profession's gratitude to the Little Church "which has married us, baptized our children, and buried our dead." The Bishop of Liverpool, who was in this country, made a fine speech, and then everyone joined lustily in "God Bless the Little Church Around the Corner," that sentimental old ballad which had knocked 'em dead in the seventies. Every theatrical club or affiliation in America, almost, was represented that day, even including some from Hollywood, for this was a great day in theatrical history. A play-actor, who once upon a time could not get buried from a church, was now being enshrined in a stained-glass window! And with scenes from a play!

For the window had a bold and audacious design. It showed Jefferson, as the Good Samaritan, leading his friend, George Holland, toward the lich-gate—but Jefferson was in his familiar leather jerkin from *Rip Van Winkle*, with a long, gray beard! Holland was swathed about in a shroud. And greeting them at the lich-gate, with hands outstretched, was the Saviour Himself.

If this was not unorthodox enough—over these panels, and beneath them, were scenes from *Rip Van Winkle*. There was Rip's wife scolding, while Rip idled around and his little dog waited to go

for a romp. Then came the scene where Rip quaffed the deep draught of wine that sent him into a nap for the next twenty years, and finally his awakening in the Catskills, with Hendrik Hudson's men playing ninepins all around him—and some of them waving huge steins aloft!

It was Prohibition, remember, and if I received one scorching letter about those steins, I must have received six hundred! Pictures of the window had been widely reproduced all over the nation, especially in those sepia-colored supplements they used to call rotogravures, and every convinced teetotaler in the country must have taken pen in hand. The Guild was hauled over the coals for committing such blasphemy, but I especially was under attack, for I was a minister of the Gospel and "should know better." Shocking! Indecent! Corrupting public morals! These were some of the mildest expletives. As I read some of them, I did a slow burn under the ecclesiastical collar and was often tempted to poison-pen a few lines in return—but Mollie, as always, kept a cool head on my shoulders, and what I did write in haste went into the wastebasket.

The Charles A. Stevenson, by the way, who spoke at the Jefferson services, was a veteran of the boards who had played opposite Mrs. Leslie Carter in *Zaza*, and who had once been married to the famous Kate Claxton. She had died just a few months before, a popular player who seemed to be dogged by sudden disaster. She had been the heroine of the tragic Brooklyn theater fire of 1876, and had been burned in her escape from the building. Later a second theater in which she was playing caught fire. Then the hotel in which she was staying. Then her apartment. She began to get the reputation of being a jinx, and managers for a while were afraid to employ her. Then she married Charles A. Stevenson, and although she became the mother of six children, she kept on with her career. She too was a member of Augustin Daly's brilliant stock company, and later became the star of the Union Square Theatre. Often, when the company went on the road, she would sit up all night in a swaying day-coach holding a baby in her arms. But eventually her marriage ended in divorce, and she had to be father and mother to her

children. The final blow was when her only son took his life, considering himself a failure. Then she was truly hard-pressed for solace, and often used to find her way in through the lich-gate, to pray with Dr. Houghton.

Yet in spite of all her hard luck, Kate Claxton lived to be a venerable old lady of seventy-four, well-loved and respected. When someone once asked her the secret of her serenity, she answered: "Every woman must keep busy. Keeping busy helps one to forget oneself, and selfishness is the first step toward old age. Don't brood. Live in the present. Live in the heart of a city. Keep busy. Laugh every day."

That was her philosophy, come by the hard way, and good advice it is. I especially like that *Laugh every day*. Surely few women ever went through greater ordeals than Kate Claxton, or bore them so courageously. That is why we are so proud of having the Kate Claxton mirror as one of our souvenirs up in Guild Hall. It is the long pier glass in which she looked so often, to give some last-minute adjustment or touch to her costume. Our brides of today often appreciate the use of a long mirror just before the ceremony, and in the last thirty years I suppose hundreds of brides have slowly pirouetted before Kate Claxton's mirror. Curiously enough, in spite of her ill-starred life, they believe it brings them luck—and it may be, for we have had unusual luck with the success of our marriages. But I prefer to think that perhaps the "vibrations" of the place endow them with some of that great lady's spirit and indomitable mettle.

Since I have mentioned "vibrations," will you kindly listen while I expound a theory I have in regard to our church? I first expressed it to Mary Mullett, the writer, who used to live on Twenty-ninth Street and who came to see me one day about an article for *The American Magazine*. She had spent a long time observing the church and its comings and goings, both before the death of the second Dr. Houghton and after my taking over, and she had discovered for herself the curious attraction that hovers over the place and the magnetism it seems to exert on those who come within its circle.

Was it only her imagination, she wondered—or had others observed it too? And if so, could I explain it? What was this spell?

I told her that I had experienced this thing myself on my very first visit to the church many years before, and that many people since had told me they felt the same way. It was like a radiation of spirit. Then I told her that, though I was no scientist, I had evolved a sort of explanation that satisfied me, and conceivably might make sense to others.

"*Vibrations*," I told her. Then I went on to explain:

"The sunlight coming in through that window is simply one form of vibrations, isn't it? The heat from the radiator over there is another form. The sound of my voice—nothing but vibrations. Those wires on the top of the building yonder—they are there to catch the vibrations sent out by radio instruments miles away. Isn't that so?"

She nodded.

"Very well," I went on, "here is something else to think about. You surely have gone into certain homes where you were conscious of a pervading spirit of harmony and happiness. You may be quite alone, waiting for someone to come. Yet there is an atmosphere of peace and comfort. And I am just as sure that you have gone into other homes where you had a subtle sense of discord, or of depression and disaster. Isn't this true?"

"Yes, it is," she agreed.

"All right! Now, when people enter this church they have a sense of peace and comfort. The place may be humanly empty; yet I know—for they have told me—that they feel as if they were in a kindly *home*, with all which that word can mean.

"This is the way I explain it," I continued. "The Little Church has been a constant dwelling place for goodness and kindness. The first Dr. Houghton was the spirit of love and charity personified. So was his nephew, who carried on the work. The one bit of counsel he gave to the countless young people whom he married was, 'Be kind!' And think of all those young couples, an endless stream of them, radiating love and happiness!

"How do we know that our *emotions* do not give out vibrations?

Doesn't it seem quite possible that a place may be 'charged' with happiness? Is it any more wonderful than that this room can be filled with vibrations of light and heat and sound? Or that a copper wire can be charged with electricity?

"To me," I continued, "it doesn't seem any more strange. And if people realized that their homes and offices can be 'charged' with happiness and harmony, or with unhappiness and discord, I believe they would be more careful to create the right kind of atmosphere around them.

"Here in the Little Church," I went on, "we are not rich in money; but we have one great endowment. It has been accumulating for many years. The contributors have been, in the first place, the workers within the church who have filled it with the spirit of kindness. And then there have been the countless visitors who have left here an immeasurable store of good wishes and loving thoughts.

"The greatest thing I have learned here is that the power of kindness cannot be overestimated. Neither can we set any limit to the results of just one kindly act."

As an example of what I meant by this, I told her of an experience which was fresh in my mind. The previous year, and not long after I had come in as rector, a young woman had asked to see me in my study. She told me she was a nurse, that she had been ill for some months, and that the doctors had informed her, just a day or two before, that the diagnosis was cancer.

"I haven't come to ask you for money," she said. "I have saved about two thousand dollars. Of that amount I shall need five hundred dollars to pay for the operation and hospital expenses. But I have no relatives, not even any friends I can ask to look after my affairs. Will you take charge of the rest of my money? If I need it, you can give it back to me. If I don't come through—well, then you can use it to help somebody else."

"But," I pointed out to her, "we are perfect strangers to you!"

"No," she replied. "It's true I've never seen you before today, but you are not a stranger! This church is a friend to everyone who *needs* a friend."

Well, naturally, we took charge of her money as she requested. Sister Dorothy, one of the church sisters, went with her to the hospital, and while she was there some of us went to see her almost every day. The operation was successful. She recovered her health and strength as the months went by, and we very happily returned her her money. But here's the most interesting part of it. When she returned to her work, she was a much finer nurse than she had ever been before. The doctors quickly noticed this, and she was in constant demand on cases. Her experience had taught her sympathy, understanding, and kindliness. I like to think it was the vibrations here at the Little Church that told her originally she could come to us and trust us—just as she, in turn, helped to pass on this healing radiation to others.

Then there was the man who came to see me one day, again a total stranger. In his face was a terrible bitterness—not merely sorrow, but a brooding resentment. It was one of those cases where he hated his wife—though the violence of his passion showed he still loved her—and he was determined on revenge.

"I'm going to divorce her!" he declared to me sullenly.

I talked to him awhile, making very little headway, and at last I said, "Will you do me one favor? Before you leave, go into the church. Kneel there and pray for help to see what is right. Then I ask you to sit in the pew and *think things over*. That's all I ask you to do; but I want you to search your own mind and heart honestly and sincerely. Will you promise to do that?"

He did promise, and went from my study into the church. I didn't see him again, and didn't know what the outcome was for some time. Then I received a letter from him saying that he and his wife had become reconciled, and were happier together than ever before.

He told me that when he had gone into the church—which I believe to be filled with an almost tangible spirit of loving-kindness—he had begun to examine his own soul with sincerity and earnestness, and had found there much that needed to be forgiven. Then he had gone to seek his wife, had asked forgiveness for all *his* faults, and the icy barrier between them had melted away. She begged him

to forgive *her* faults. And so, with humble hearts and mutual charity, they found themselves clinging to each other in a complete renewal of love, joy, and faith.

I knew that I myself had felt almost a *presence* of perfect understanding the first time I had entered the church, and as time went on I realized that many others experienced the same sort of sensation.

One day a young actor came into my study with a rather strange request. He had been attending our services off and on for a few months, but he was not a member of the church, or even, it seemed, a very religious man. But this day he said to me, "Something quite wonderful has happened to me, only I don't want to talk about it or tell you what it is. At least, not now. But I want to ask you a favor. There's a little chapel in the church. I don't know what you call it, but it's the one where there's a tiny light always burning above the altar."

"Oh yes," I said, "you mean the Lady Chapel."

"Well, I just want to go into that chapel," he said, "and sit there alone. Can that be arranged?"

"We can't close the chapel," I told him, "but it is very secluded and few people go into it at this time of day. You won't be disturbed. Sit there as long as you like—and I hope you will find what you are seeking."

He went into the chapel—and he was still there, sitting quietly, when it came time to close. I don't know to this day what was the "wonderful thing" that had come to him. Was it the love of God? Or the love of some woman? Whatever it was, it had made him long to be in touch with something outside himself, something high and holy. And he seemed to find that something in the chapel that is "like a jewel-box in which the memory of a human love is enshrined." In the chapel where the second rector had also remained in silence so many hours on end, alone.

CHAPTER XIV

We Buy Elm Ridge at Litchfield, Connecticut—Our Neighbor Edith Rockhill—Alec Aynsley and Florence Wood Join Our Household—Ann Haight and More New Friends—Kathryna's Fabulous Doll House—Prohibition and My Fight for Repeal—The Roosevelts—The Barrymores—Death of John Drew—the Edwin Booth Window.

THE SUMMER after Martha's Vineyard, we decided to spend our vacation in Connecticut. Richard Dana, grandson of Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, had a home in the small town of Washington, Litchfield County, which he was willing to rent us. He was a well-known architect, extremely capable, and he had restored the house lovingly to its original beauty, furnishing it faithfully to the period. Here at last we had the pewter and old pine we had longed for, but unhappily Dana's passion for authenticity had extended even as far as the beds. They were the old-fashioned kind with wooden slats instead of springs, and after a summer of trying to sleep on them, I certainly developed a new sympathy for the old sour-faced Puritans! It's hard to have a rosy outlook on life when you never get a night's rest.

We made many friends in this little hamlet of Washington, and one dear old lady offered us a place quite gratis if we would return

every year. But meantime we had gone up to Litchfield, twenty miles away, to pay a visit to our old friend, Edith Rockhill, and had fallen completely in love with that Revolutionary town.

Litchfield calls itself the Queen City of Connecticut, but that's a misnomer. It's not in any sense a city, and never has had any commercial interests at all. There is not even a railroad station there; you have to get off at New Milford and drive. But it is one of the shadiest, loveliest, and most unspoiled towns left anywhere in America.

The friend we had come to visit, Edith Rockhill, was a native of Litchfield—she had been born Edith Perkins. During the winter she lived at her town house in Manhattan, and she called herself my "first convert." Of course as you know, I have never converted anyone; but Edith had transferred herself to our church from someplace uptown, and was a very loyal member. Also, she was something of a character, with a house full of wonderful souvenirs from all over the world, and the repeated boast that she had, in her lifetime, "closed three courts." She had married William Woodville Rockhill, a diplomat who had been our ambassador to the court of St. Petersburg just before the Russian revolution. He had also been stationed at the courts of Turkey and China just before those countries too were overwhelmed by revolution. She had a collection of exquisite jades and ivories brought over from China, some of them gifts from the old Dowager Empress, whom she had known very well. She had prayer wheels from Tibet—for she was one of the few Western women ever to enter that forbidden land—and carpets from Turkey, and all sorts of mementos. Almost every one of them was good for a story, which she told very well, for she was a woman of spirit and a fine *raconteuse*.

The ambassador, it seems, had been a widower when she married him, and she would freely describe how she had had all the initials changed on the household linens—towels, sheets, pillow cases, everything—"because I got so tired of being followed around by the first Mrs. R."

Mr. R., she admitted, had a roving eye for the ladies, and was

often far from home. That was the year, for example, that Queen Marie of Rumania was touring America and capturing hearts as well as headlines. Mr. R. was trailing her about, very much a part of her entourage. If Edith resented this, she bore it very well. "How many women," she would shrug, "can complain that their husbands are running around with a Queen?"

When William finally died, Edith spent most of her time at the old homestead in Connecticut. She had learned to smoke abroad, but dared not offend the mores of her village by lighting up in public. She therefore took to the hills, going out two or three times a day for long rambles, and flattering herself that no one saw her up there, puffing away like a chimney. But one day her aged great-aunt, who shared the old house with her, looked up from her knitting. "Edith," she said tartly, "I will not intimate that you are a *fast* woman, really, but you have outgrown our ways. Most definitely, you have outgrown Litchfield!" That was all the warning she got to watch her step, or get out of town. She was much more careful.

Mollie and I told Edith how greatly we were taken with Litchfield, and that we would like to have a home there if we could find something to our liking. She drew our attention to the place across the road from hers, a farm that for one hundred and fifty years had been known as Elm Ridge. It belonged to some cousins of hers who were willing to sell.

At first glance, it was ugly. The big house was painted a scabby sort of yellow, with a sprawling *porte cochère* and gingerbread porches. It seemed a perfect example of the Early Pullman period. But it sat on the brow of a noble hill, surrounded by some of the most magnificent elms I have ever seen, and a sweet stream of water flowed through the field just below the old carriage house. Richard Dana came up to have a look at it for us, and told us to grab it. "All the house needs is a haircut and shave," he informed us airily. "Take off the gimcrack and strip it back down to its Colonial lines. The house is a beauty."

And so that is how we got our second home, our beloved Elm Ridge. Dana did a fine job. He stripped off the *porte cochère* and

the Victorian scrollwork, and revealed a fine Colonial house of the Federal period. This we painted white with the traditional green New England shutters, and we moved in happily. We rented the two hundred and fifty acres that constituted the farm to farmers who wanted to graze their cows on the land, and I undertook to make a garden.

There was a place where a sheep barn had once stood, on three levels or terraces. The land was very rich, naturally, from years of sheep droppings, and it was there I laid out our garden with formal brick walks, stone benches, and a pool to reflect the sky. I gave up my golf to muck about contentedly among the rosebushes and zinnias, and Kathryna spent many happy hours sailing boats in the pool as I worked. Mollie would sit on a bench nearby, and this is the picture I have of our family group. God in His wisdom never lets us know when we are at the happiest peak of our lives, and it is well that He doesn't, for we would lose the enjoyment of the present in premature grief for our possible loss. But I know now that Mollie and I were at the height of our happiness there at Elm Ridge, as we planned for the future and watched our little daughter begin to grow up.

Two more members of the household joined us at that time. The first was Alec Aynsley, Isabelle's brother who had come over from Scotland. He lived in remodeled quarters above the old carriage house and served us as gardener and houseman and general factotum. The other was Florence Wood, an Englishwoman whom Isabelle had found to serve as Kathryna's nurse. Alec carried on a running feud with the local delivery boys, for he had a British abhorrence for anyone of the "tradesmen's class" who might approach the house by the main entrance. There was a side road leading around back that was good enough for the likes of them, and he was forever heading them off and shooing them around to it. Florence fitted into our household at once, adoring Kathryna and being loved in return. She never has left us, in fact; and when Kathryna grew up, Florence became my housekeeper here at the rectory.

Some of my fondest friends still date from those Litchfield days. There was Ann Haight who flew the Atlantic right after Lindbergh, and who was crazy about horses. She was a most vivacious person, who always acted just as she felt on the spur of the moment. We first saw her at a lawn party on the Van Winkle estate, where a law-abiding Prohibition punch had been served—but to which, unbeknownst, some subversive guests had added champagne, cognac, and bootleg gin! This had a devastating effect on many of the company, which became manifest when they tried to line up for the Grand March finale. Ann, who was very young and very pretty, was just in front of us in line, and was talking a blue streak. Suddenly she whirled around, encountered Mollie's amused smile, and flung her arms around her. "Oh, you darling, you!" she cried. And that was our introduction to the lovely Ann Haight, wife of Sherman Haight, who is now one of my vestrymen. Since that long-ago party, Ann has produced three children, all of whom I baptized, and written several books, all of which I have read with great enjoyment. "If you want something done, always ask a busy person" applies especially to Ann. In spite of all her activities and her travels to the Middle East and Alaska, she always seems to find time for those who really need her. Often I have asked her to do things for the church that I knew nobody else would take the trouble to do—and bless her generous spirit, she has never let me down.

Then there were Admiral and Mrs. Hussey who bought a big house on South Street, and whose adopted daughter, Faith, became a friend of Kathryna's. When the girls got older and used to go out on dates, Mrs. Hussey would phone me promptly at ten if they hadn't returned, and proceed to worry herself frantic on the phone. After that she would keep Faith in the house for a couple of days as punishment, and not allow her to see any friends. Yet I must say that Mrs. Hussey loved the girl truly and left her all her estate when she died.

Litchfield had a most beautiful church, which was a small reproduction of the famous cathedral at Lichfield in England. Mollie and

I often went to early Sunday service there, where we met everyone in town—old Madame Seymour, who was the social arbiter of the place and who thought it was so shocking that Edith Rockhill should come home from Turkey and smoke cigarettes; her nearby neighbor, Mrs. Woodruff, who was Edith's friend and public defender; Mrs. Bailey Ripley, whose large estate, Kilravock, was the scene of the horse show each year; and her young son, Dillon, who used to moon over Edith's collection of jades and offer to dust them—an offer that was always laughingly refused, "because you have too many pockets in your clothes, my fine lad!" But I think these souvenirs instilled in Dillon a lingering wanderlust, for he became a famous globe-trotter in his time, and wrote a number of books. He married Mary Livingston, another of Mollie's cousins.

The Wilson children, and others who used to play with Kathryna, are all grown up now, but they still talk about the fabulous doll's house that was in the playhouse out in the garden. This had been a Christmas gift from Mabel Gerry, who had designed it herself and had it made by the same cabinetmaker who had made Queen Mary's doll's house in England. It was eight feet long and five feet high, and was an exact reproduction of one of the old houses in Berkeley Square. Mabel called it "Drury Lane" in honor of her husband's family, and she had spent two years collecting the miniature furniture that went into it. It was the most completely appointed doll's house on this side of the ocean, and was said to rival Queen Mary's at Buckingham Palace.

Kathryna wondered for a whole week before Christmas what was taking place in the rectory library. One of the windows on the second floor had to be removed so that a large crate could be pulled through, and every day Mabel arrived with her secretary and a maid. They all spent hours together in the library, behind closed doors, and Kathryna was wild with impatience. When finally the doors were thrown open on Christmas morning, and my small daughter caught her first glimpse of "Kathryna's House, Drury Lane, East Twenty-ninth Street, New York City," she stood stockstill with her

eyes popping out and her mouth opened wide. She was, as she later admitted, "quite overcome."

The house had fourteen rooms, a garage, a lawn with complete garden furniture; a roof garden, electric lights, running water, linen in the closets; wine, champagne and Scotch in the cellar; cocktail shaker in the butler's pantry; Chippendale and Tudor furniture in the dining room; bathmats, vacuum sweepers; books in the library; thermometers, refrigerators; and flowers and bric-a-brac set about on the tables.

Mabel had collected these furnishings in England, France, Switzerland, and Italy, and when she could not find what she wanted, she made it. The house had a master and mistress, properly arrayed, and three children with nurses and various servants. There was a little old grandmother in old-fashioned mourning, and a chauffeur to drive the French car that was parked in the garage. There was even a motorcycle of Italian manufacture.

For several months the doll's house took up a wall of the rectory library, then it was moved to Elm Ridge. Mabel built a special playhouse for it at the foot of our rock garden, all complete with a small fireplace and pint-sized couches, tables and chairs. There the doll's house was set up again, placed away from the wall so that the children could get in behind it and play with its furnishings. It was an honest bit of Wonderland where Kathryna and her pals spent many enchanted hours. Among the little girls was Leslie Howard's daughter, Leslie, who is now married and living in Canada. She was one of Kathryna's closest playmates and is godmother to Kathryna's small daughter, Leslie, who is named in her honor.

I have mentioned the cocktail shaker that came with the house, as well as the supply of champagne and Scotch. Kathryna's early tact was evidenced when she and Leslie were "serving cocktails" one day to the dolls in their living room, and an adult onlooker reminded her that Prohibition was in force, and that she might get into trouble. She thought for a moment—then pointed out brightly that the house was in England, in Berkeley Square in fact, so she was doing no wrong! It was pretty quick thinking for anyone, let

alone a little Miss Moppet of not more than five. Amid gales of laughter, the "cocktail party" went on.

This is as good a place as any, I suppose, to explain how I felt about Prohibition, for it was one of the few public issues on which I have ever taken a stand from the pulpit. By and large I believe the church is the place for God's business, and politics and governmental affairs belong somewhere outside. But I was appalled at the hypocrisy Prohibition encouraged among people who had always been honest, and at the terrible spoilage it was causing among our youth.

I had been brought up in a Southern household where liquor was served at mealtime, but where I had never seen it abused. When I grew up, I often enjoyed a cocktail or highball before dinner, but never took more than two. I had promised myself when I entered the Seminary that I wouldn't be a stuffed shirt, but at the same time I would never be in a condition where it would not be proper for me to go directly to a sickbed or shrive a dying man. I had kept that pledge. Liquor to me had never been "the snare of the devil" or a toboggan chute to hell, and it was hardly necessary, I felt, for anyone to enact a law to protect me from it. While some people abused it, and while there certainly was room for improvement in the local saloons, I knew plenty of citizens who enjoyed a quiet drink without causing too much gloating in the regions below.

But it was the liquor industry itself, of course, that was to blame for Prohibition. By their own admission, the brewers and distillers held the mortgages on most of the local saloons, and their power over saloon-keepers was firm and absolute. They could easily have forced a reform from inside the trade, but they never lifted a finger. The old-fashioned saloon was too often a neighborhood disgrace, noisy and smelly, with uncouth characters lounging about its swinging doors and making life rough for decent people when they passed. Women, by and large, detested these places and prayed that their husbands and sons would never go near one. And it was true that unscrupulous barkeepers would permit a man to drink up the last

cent of his pay, and even run into debt. Or would toss some unfortunate out into the gutter without any sense of responsibility for having gotten him drunk.

The handwriting had been up on the wall for a number of years. It could be read in the success of such plays as *Ten Nights in a Barroom,* such popular recitations as *The Face on the Barroom Floor,* and such lachrymose ballads as *"Father, dear father, come home with me now."* A well-organized temperance movement had been marching inexorably through the dry belt for decades, and had held up the picture of the saloon as a den of iniquity where honest workingmen were robbed of their earnings and little children deprived of their food. Any newspaper artist at a loss for an idea could always knock out a picture of Old John Barleycorn chortling over his victims, and his editor would pass it as the cartoon of the day. The propaganda was ceaseless. Millions were spent. And finally the time came when it wasn't quite nice socially to admit that you were "wet."

It is perfectly true that the Anti-Saloon League, which raised huge sums of money, was aided and abetted by the Protestant churches. But what decisively favored the dry movement in 1917 was the fact that two million American males were in Europe fighting, and that many of the brewers left at home were German. In the public prejudice, that meant they must be pro-German in sympathy—*ergo,* to buy liquor was to help the German cause. It was all a little illogical, but there is no doubt that this consideration had a good deal to do with the emotional side of the question. Prohibition was finally railroaded through Congress with hardly a debate, and on January 20, 1920, it became illegal to have a glass of wine on your table.

My own dignified mother, who had never touched anything but wine in her life, or, on very special occasions, perhaps a mint julep, was so outraged at being *forbidden* to drink that she said, "Well, I simply won't stand for it!"—and learned to drink Martinis made from bathtub gin. I don't think she enjoyed them, for she sipped them *very* slowly, but she persisted as though it were a part of her

constitutional duty. "Because I will *not* be dictated to," she would say. "I will do as I please."

The clergy itself was divided on this public issue. The Bishop of New York said that he did not believe in Prohibition, but as long as it was the law of the land, he would not take part in buying or selling liquor, and would not permit it to be served in his presence. Other bishops of the church took just the opposite view and felt that their influence should be thrown against what they regarded as a public evil. As for Mollie and myself, we fell into that very large section of the American public known as "scofflaws"—i.e., we bought raw white alcohol when we could get it, flavored it with tincture of juniper berry bought at the drugstore, and served it to our guests as "orange blossoms," or in any other disguise that would make it halfway palatable.

It was easy in those days to end up in jail. Bootleggers, of course, had their "fix" with the law, but the individual citizen could find himself behind bars for any one of a dozen infractions. One of the worst of these was transporting liquor across a state line.

One day a parishioner, who even now shall remain nameless, presented me with a bottle of very fine whisky, real Canadian Club. It was Friday afternoon, and I was just about to take off for Litchfield, accompanied by Miss Hanlon, my secretary, who was coming up for the weekend. Mollie phoned before we left and asked me to buy her a negligee at one of the New York stores; so Miss Hanlon nipped around to Altman's and picked out something quite lacy and frilly. Back at the rectory she took off the wrappings, and we stuffed the negligee into my bag—and while the bag was still open, Miss Hanlon reached for the bottle of rye. "We might as well take this up too," she remarked. "There's probably nothing like it up there." So we popped the Canadian Club in on top of the negligee and started for the station.

In those days we went up by train, getting off at New Milford, where we were met by the car. I set the suitcase down near the front of the coach when we boarded the train, and Miss Hanlon and I found seats not far back, where we chatted and looked out the

window. Imagine our horror when we glanced up after the train had stopped at Norwalk and discovered the suitcase had vanished! We hunted around everywhere, asked all sorts of questions. No one had seen it. When we reached Milford, we blurted our story to Alec and the chauffeur. "Leave it to us," said Alec with confidence. "We'll drive back and find it." I had no idea how they hoped to accomplish this, but sure enough in a couple of hours they were back, suitcase in tow. They had found it, they said, standing on the platform at Norwalk, all alone and unguarded. It had apparently been taken from the train by mistake, and abandoned there unopened. But it was a very close call, and I still shudder to think how near I came to some sensational headlines.

But Prohibition was not very amusing. Drinking and drunkenness were tremendously on the increase. People drank anything they could get their hands on that had alcohol in it, and it was smart among young people not to stop drinking till they had finished the bottle, or bottles. Moderate drinking, such as I had learned in my father's household, was almost forgotten. Many growing up during the thirteen years of Prohibition never learned to drink in an adult and civilized fashion, and this alone can account for thousands of those who, in later life, could find no answer except in Alcoholics Anonymous. They might never have had such a problem under normal conditions, but they got started off wrong.

By the latter part of the twenties, it was becoming apparent to a great many people that our "noble experiment" was a dismal flop. A group of courageous women, headed by Mrs. Charles Sabin and Mrs. Courtlandt Nicoll, formed the Women's Organization for National Prohibition Reform. Both were members of my parish, and they asked my support. That was how I came to stand up in my pulpit on the Sunday of February 16, 1930, and tear loose on the Dry Law. The sermon drew wide attention all over the country, partly because of my known principle of never mixing in political affairs if I could avoid it.

"I believe that Prohibition as we have it today," I began, "is debasing public and private life. I unhesitatingly assert from my own

experience in a parish that is known the world over for its philanthropic and humanitarian work, where doors are open at all hours to the needs of all classes, that the rapid increase of drinking among our boys and girls, the number of girls under sixteen in our rescue homes, the increase of deaths from alcoholism, not only among the rich, but in every class, are appalling.

"I, as a clergyman, in our parish here, because of its peculiar place in society created through more than eighty years of work with derelicts, come into contact with literally hundreds of men and women who are in worse condition today than before Prohibition."

I told them that Prohibition had been especially brutal to the weak and unfortunate. Before the Eighteenth Amendment, we could send destitute alcoholics to public institutions where they could be treated and cared for. But now alcoholism no longer existed, legally at least, and so the city and churches had discontinued such asylums. Now we had "psychiatric wards" where alcoholics were dumped among the insane, and where their sufferings were greater than ever before.

"I wish I could have every advocate of Prohibition go with me to these psychiatric wards at Bellevue or Welfare Island," I continued, "where they might see for themselves the conditions that prevail. It is full time that every religious and social organization in this city faced facts as they are. If we are to clear our eyes and not depend on a legal fiction, then we must bestir ourselves in the interests of our less fortunate and weaker brethren and provide some adequate treatment within their means. There is nothing constructive in a system that can incarcerate an alcoholic until he is sober, and then turn him loose again until he dies finally an outcast, a person lost in body and soul."

I concluded my sermon by telling my listeners about the group formed by Mrs. Sabin and Mrs. Nicoll, and called upon them to fall in line behind them and give their support. I promised my own support for the duration of the battle—until we won repeal, backed by new and more sensible laws.

I was amazed at the reaction to this sermon from all over the

country. It was reprinted almost *in toto* by papers as far apart as the *Wilmington* (Del.) *Journal,* the *Youngstown* (O.) *Telegram,* the *Oklahoma City* (Okla.) *Times,* the *Bronx Home News,* the *Providence* (R.I.) *Journal,* the *Chicago Post,* the *Boston Post,* the *Dallas Herald,* the *Lincoln* (Neb.) *Star,* the *Portland* (Ore.) *News,* and scores of other organs. The clippings, collected by my secretary, kept piling up day after day, and were heaped on my desk. And with them, of course, came the deluge in the mail of replies and denunciations.

I was accused of "selling out to the liquor interests." Some of the letters, in all honesty, came from people who still believed in Prohibition. But the majority came from fanatics who held the sadistic view that people who drank ought to suffer, and the more the better! The wildest epistles contained violent threats against my person; and even the mildest suggested I should be summarily unfrocked. Nor were all the letters from laymen. Many came from politicians, and even some, I was shocked to see, from the clergy.

I went on, all the same, with my campaign from the pulpit, and during the week I talked from lecture platforms with Mrs. Sabin and Mrs. Nicoll. It was wonderful how these women, and the other women who worked with them, fought to undo the harm they had unwittingly caused. Women, it was said, were responsible for Prohibition. But it was women, I would like to stress, who defeated it too. Of course the diehards and the organized lobbies, such as the Anti-Saloon League and the WCTU, continued to denounce us. But many other women were fair-minded enough to admit their mistake. When the Brown-Jenks Bill was hotly debated in Albany, women heavily outnumbered the men in the chamber. The Drys brought forth their ammunition in the form of letters from prominent upstate businessmen, including the president of a life insurance company, and the owner of a newspaper chain declaring that Prohibition had "helped the country morally and financially." Our side retaliated with letters denouncing Prohibition, including one from Bishop Charles Fiske of Utica, and one from myself.

"It seems to me," Bishop Fiske stated, "that the moral issue presented by this ghastly tragedy of corruption and hypocrisy, arising out of the attempted enforcement of the Volstead Act, calls for plain speaking. I believe that it is a chief instrument in the increase of lawlessness." This, of course, was true; and criminologists know that the powerfully organized crime syndicates of later years may be traced back to Prohibition. As Al Smith put it: "The bootleggers begot the hijackers, and the hijackers begot the racketeers."

My statement at Albany was that we were faced by a moral problem which menaced our whole society. "Prohibition as we have it today," I declared, "is debasing public and private life. I unhesitatingly assert from my own experience in my parish that I know this to be true. Women, the original movers for Prohibition, are now turning their backs on it." And I was supported in this by Marian Boothe Kelly, legislative chairman of the New York State branch of the Women's Organization for Prohibition Reform, who stated that women favored Prohibition originally, but that after ten years of the "noble experiment" were calling it now the "tragic experiment."

During the bitter fight in Albany, we presented many converts to the cause of Repeal. One of these was the Rev. Ernest Caldecott, a courageous Unitarian from Schenectady, who had been one of the original crusaders for the Dry Law. "Many years ago," he said, "I appeared here as a Dry. I have since found Prohibition impractical. There is too much hypocrisy in connection with it. I am sure that the majority of men who will vote for this Prohibition Bill are personally 'wet.' I mean no disrespect by that, because I am sure that they have been taught how to drink properly and know how to handle it. Nevertheless, it is hypocrisy to vote one way and act another." He was roundly booed by the Drys, who now regarded him as a renegade and a traitor.

But the fact that clergymen were willing to stand up and be counted helped to lend an air of respectability to the Wets. People, as usual, were afraid of being caught on the unpopular side. I just

cannot overemphasize the moral courage of such women as Pauline Sabin and Ione Nicoll, and other brave women who fought for what they believed to be right, even though they became the target of all kinds of mudslinging. Mrs. Sabin, who later became Mrs. Dwight Davis and one of the Capitol's most popular hostesses, died last winter in Washington, and was brought to Southampton for burial. I drove down there to conduct her services one bitter, windy day; and though I was ill with the flu for weeks afterward, I felt honored to have been given the opportunity to pay my last tribute. Pauline Sabin was a champion in shining armor who helped to rid this country of the blight of Prohibition, and I think the women of America might well erect a statue to honor her name.

Of course, Franklin Roosevelt came into office on the promise that he would do something about Repeal. I knew his mother, "Madame Roosevelt" as she was often called. She was the niece of Franklin Delano, whose wife had given us the lich-gate, and when in New York she often came to service. Also I journeyed up to Hyde Park a number of times for the christening of various small Delanos and Roosevelts. I was always graciously received, but it struck me that the whole clan, including her son, was greatly in awe of Sara Delano Roosevelt.

The Roosevelt for whom I had the greatest liking then, and still have today, was Eleanor. She always had that simplicity of manner which goes with large spirit. Never did she try to impress anyone with wealth or position, and she was thoughtfulness itself. I recall that she and the President, called upon to attend the wedding of one of their young relatives, made it a point to arrive rather late, after the reception had got well under way. This, Mrs. Roosevelt later confided, was because she and her husband still remembered how overshadowed they had been at their own wedding by "Uncle Theodore's" presence. Uncle Teddy had been President then, and everyone had forgotten the bride and groom in the thrill of the great man's company. So she and Franklin put in their appearance, then disappeared, in order to avoid the same thing's happening again. I thought this was typical of Eleanor Roosevelt's

thoughtfulness and her rare ability to place herself in the position of others.

I wonder how many people could bear the personal attacks and the bitter insults hurled at her, with this woman's dignity? I think the nation as a whole has failed to realize her stature. She seems to be almost completely without personal ambition, or self-seeking, yet she has contributed so much to the cause of the United Nations that I think only history can estimate her value. When I think of her, the word "honesty" comes instantly to mind. I have seen Mrs. Roosevelt a number of times at the parties given by Bob Porterfield at the Barter Theater in Abingdon, Virginia, for she is almost as fond of the theater as I am. Abingdon, of course, is where Bob Porterfield honors some person from the theater each year, the award being a fine Virginia ham and an acre of ground on one of the knobs outside the town. I was familiar with the town, for you will remember that I spent four years there attending Emory and Henry College.

One year it was Ethel Barrymore whom the Barter Theater honored. Otis Skinner was the master of ceremonies, and he referred in his speech to the time when Winston Churchill wanted to marry Miss Barrymore. He had seen her in *Alice Sit-by-the-Fire,* way back in 1905, had fallen for her stately dark beauty and asked for her hand. But Ethel "married into arms," as she puts it, meaning she married one of the Colts of firearm fame. When Otis Skinner reminded her that she might have become Lady Churchill, she just flashed him that quick smile of hers and remarked enigmatically, "But you can't tell *what* kind of Lady Churchill I might have made!"

Of course, Ethel Barrymore would have made a charming Lady Churchill—or charming anything else she had wanted to be. But I have always regretted somewhat that the Barrymores did not belong to the Little Church, like their uncle John Drew. Their mother Georgiana, John Drew's sister, had been converted to Catholicism by the Polish actress, Modjeska, and she raised her children that way, even though her husband, Maurice Barrymore, was an Episcopalian and the son of an English vicar. His real name was Herbert

Blythe, his family one of the most respectable in England. He died early in the century, during the time of the second Dr. Houghton, and was buried here from the church.

Of course all the Barrymores came to the church on various occasions. John Drew's memorial service was held here in 1927. He had been playing in San Francisco in *Trelawny of the Wells*, when he was taken ill and moved to Dante Sanitarium, where he lay chafing under the realization that he could not return "home" to his beloved Players' Club, of which he had been president for twenty-two years. His body was cremated, and his ashes interred in Mount Vernon Cemetery, Philadelphia. A great memorial service was held here at the church for him on November thirteenth, which, strangely enough, was not only his birthday, but the birthday of his mother and of Edwin Booth as well. Again it was Otis Skinner who presided over the ceremonies, and he spoke very suitably of John Drew's genius for friendship and his unfailing thoughtfulness and consideration for others. His last words on earth were "Thank her for me"—a request to his daughter that she thank a nurse who had shown him some special attention. I myself have mentioned his prompt condolences after Dr. Houghton's death, and the telegram he sent us at the birth of Kathryna. He also remembered to have flowers sent to the altar each year on the anniversary of his wife's death, for they had been married at the Little Church, and his daughter had been baptized here.

John Drew was not the greatest actor of the Drew-Barrymore dynasty, for he always played a sort of urbane type known to professionals as a "John Drew part." But I doubt if there was a man on the American stage who had more friends. He was "Uncle Jack" to a whole generation of actors, and his passing was marked by spontaneous grief. In the church on the day of his memorial service were Booth Tarkington, Frank Gillmore, Walter Hampden, Dan Frohman, Clayton Hamilton, Chrystal Herne, Helen Hayes, Josephine Hull, Walter Damrosch, Percy MacKaye, Frank Craven, Augustus Thomas, Blanche Ring, A. E. Thomas, and at least a thousand others. The family was represented by his daughter, Mrs.

Jack Devereaux, by her small children, and by Ethel. Both Lionel and John, as I recall, were on tour.

A year later, a memorial window to John Drew was unveiled in the north wall of the nave. It was a tall and beautiful arch of stained glass, representing St. John the Beloved Disciple, and had been made in London, at the same studio which had produced the Jefferson Window. It had been commissioned by Mr. and Mrs. Jack Devereaux, and the unveiling cord was drawn by young John Drew Devereaux, Drew's only grandson.

This gave us quite an interesting juxtaposition of windows in our church. In his early days, Drew had played with Edwin Booth in *Hamlet* and with Joseph Jefferson in *Rip Van Winkle.* Now his memorial window was almost directly across from Jefferson's, while the memorial window to Edwin Booth was but a few feet away, around the turn of the south transept. It is one of the handsomest windows ever designed by John La Farge, and shows Booth in the costume of Hamlet, meditating on a mask which he holds in his hand. Underneath the picture runs the legend which Booth himself chose to serve as his epitaph. It is Hamlet's words to Horatio, when he praises him for being near to his ideal man:

> *As one, in suffering all, that suffers nothing;*
> *A man that fortune's buffets and rewards*
> *Has ta'en with equal thanks."*

I wonder if people standing before this fine window fully realize the significance of these lines as pertaining to Booth. Here certainly was a man who had suffered "fortune's buffets and rewards" to the fullest extent. He had been adored by the public. Then, at the pinnacle of his fame, came his brother's desperate act in assassinating Lincoln. Edwin Booth was in no way involved, yet he felt himself cast down to the bottomless pit. For a period he refused to appear on the stage, fearing that the very sight of him would be abhorrent to the American people. Even after renewed public plaudits proved him to be wrong in this respect, he continued to brood, feeling that tragedy pursued him somehow, as with his alter ego, Hamlet. And

so he tried to develop a sort of inner stoicism, receiving happiness and sorrow with "equal thanks" and trusting in God.

Edwin Booth was a spiritual man. He maintained his pew in the church, and except when on tour, attended service each Sunday. Often he was accompanied by his daughter, Edwina, or one of his grandchildren. He lived at the Players' Club in Gramercy Park, which he, with Jefferson and Drew and some others, had brought into existence in 1888.

Booth lived on for twenty-eight years after the shooting of Lincoln. When he died in 1893 of cerebral hemorrhage, he was buried from the church. The first Dr. Houghton was still living then, and he performed the requiem mass. Among the pallbearers were Booth's close friends Thomas Bailey Aldrich, William Bispham, and Dr. Horace Furness. They were escorting the flower-draped coffin of Booth up the aisle to the slow strains of the "Dead March" from *Saul*, when in far-off Washington the most extraordinary thing happened. According to Eleanor Ruggles' *Prince of Players*, a fine biography of Booth: ". . . in this same moment, by an eerie coincidence, three stories of Ford's Theater in Washington, where Lincoln had been shot by John Wilkes Booth and which had since been made into government offices, collapsed with a splintering roar, killing over twenty persons."

A coincidence, surely. And yet to many, it was the falling of the curtain on a tragic last act.

CHAPTER XV

We Hold the World's Record for Weddings—Evangeline Adams Is Married Here—Bride's Altar Is Dedicated—Wedding of Ann Harding—Grace Vanderbilt Elopes—Ottilie Kruger Says "I Do" —Styles in Wedding Rings—Anything Can Happen at a Wedding.

MORE WEDDINGS have been held at the Little Church Around the Corner than at any other church in the contemporary world. We hold the record.

The first bride who ever tripped up the aisle at Transfiguration was only seventeen, just a nice age for a bride in 1850. Her name was Serena Keeler, her waist was eighteen inches around, and she weighed ninety pounds. She was daintily dressed in "white mull" with a veil of Brussels lace fastened with orange blossoms, and she married a young dry-goods merchant named George Eyland. Seventy-five years later, Serena's daughter and granddaughter sat in my pew while we celebrated the seventy-fifth anniversary of the church. They were special guests of honor.

Since Serena Keeler's wedding day, an estimated one hundred thousand brides have followed in her footsteps. One third of these, more or less, were married by the two Dr. Houghtons, the remaining two thirds by myself or my assistants. If this sounds impossible,

let me assure you that on some days, in some Junes, we have performed marriages all day long, one after another, so continuously that we have had to sneak a sandwich for lunch behind the sacristy door! It has not been too unusual for us to find that we have solemnized forty-something weddings by the end of the day.

Partly this is due to the romantic aura that surrounds the Little Church, and partly it is due to our reasonable prices. You will remember that one of the very first things I did as new rector was to print up a price list so that everyone would know exactly what he had to pay and what he could expect for his money.

When you consider that in New York the fee is usually one hundred dollars just for "opening the church," then you can see how very reasonable our prices are—for it has been a point of pride with us that two persons can kneel before our beautiful Bride's Altar, be united in holy matrimony, and have twelve friends or relatives in attendance, all for as low a cost as sixteen dollars! Of course, it costs more with music—that is because organists are workmen as well as artists, and must depend on what they earn at their trade.

Our greatest year for weddings was 1929, the year *The New Yorker* sent Niven Busch, Jr., to do a Profile about me—one of the first, I believe, they ever printed. In that year we performed 2,356 marriages, or an average of six or seven a day throughout a seven-day week. Then came the Depression. Not only did fewer people marry during the hard times that followed, but those who did could ill afford a church wedding. We were just recovering from the Depression somewhat as the thirties wore on, when along came the blood tests. This was the law that requires Wassermann tests of everyone entering into marriage—a most excellent law. But it had a discouraging effect for a while on those who did not fully understand what exactly was involved, or who childishly feared the prick of a needle. Even today we meet with people who are baffled by the blood test. Just the other morning a woman called the office and asked if we would send her one of those little bottles to fill up with blood. And should she bring it to us in person, or send it in by mail?

I had not been rector of the Little Church for very long when I was called upon to marry an old-time friend—Miss Evangeline Adams. She had passed the age of sixty, never married at all, when one day she fell in love with a horoscope! She was studying the nativity chart of a man, one much younger than herself, when she suddenly realized that out of the hundreds of thousands of charts she had seen, this particular one was in curious harmony and correspondence to her own. She married this man, George Jordan, Jr., and I officiated for them. As a matter of fact, I believe the match turned out very well and brought a good deal of happiness to the few remaining years of Evangeline Adams' life.

When she died in 1932, arrangements were made to hold a great public funeral in Mecca Temple, thrown open to everyone who wanted to come, and to the thousands who had read her columns and followed her broadcasts. It was Marie Dressler who prevented this, saying that such a spectacle would have been abhorrent to Evangeline Adams, and that in fact she had mentioned that she wished to be buried from the Little Church Around the Corner. So it was that I conducted her funeral. The services were attended by friends from all walks of life—financiers, opera singers, artists, and shopgirls—for she had touched the lives of millions. It was a tremendously moving experience for me when I stood in the chancel and gazed down upon the mortal remains of this strange and highly gifted woman. She had foretold my being here—but surely she could never have foreseen a moment like this!

Our beautiful Bride's Altar, so famous all over the world, was installed in the chantry in 1926. Its cost was met by the contributions of one thousand couples, married by the second Dr. Houghton, who wished to honor his name in this way. A red leather book, always kept inside the rail, contains a list of the donors. I'm sure you could search the planet over and not find another bridal altar as lovely as this. It is made of Botticino marble and is topped by a glorious sunburst of color in the form of a painted triptych, richly limned in blue, green, and soft red, mellow and gleaming, and surrounded by a richly carved frieze of gold leaf. It represents *The*

Betrothal of the Blessed Virgin, and shows Mary and Joseph before the High Priest.

Set into this reredos, just below the painting, is the old altar screen that was used in the original chapel. It is the famous Douglas Reredos, presented years ago by the McCombs in memory of Jennie W. McComb, and salvaged from an ancient Scottish monastery that had fallen into decay. Its exact age is not known, but it is so old that the plain oak from which it was carved is quite black and worm-eaten. There is an ancient Scots superstition that good luck attends this carving of three scenes from the Crucifixion, and brides often make a point of wishing upon it. Some authorities who have examined it say it is possibly a thousand years old, and perhaps the oldest piece of wood-carving on this continent.

The altar rail that surrounds the whole shrine was presented by Edward F. Albee, of the Keith-Albee circuit, who was always a friend of the Little Church, and a member of the Guild from its very beginning.

But the feature that evokes the most comment from everyone is the tabernacle on the altar itself, in which is kept the Holy Sacrament. The door of this tabernacle, which is solid bronze, is set all around with diamonds, sapphires, rubies, amethysts, garnets, and other precious stones—gems taken from engagement rings or family heirlooms, and presented by brides. Thus the brides of yesteryear reach out to welcome the brides of today, and extend their wishes for happiness. To me, this is the crowning touch which makes this hallowed spot in all truthfulness an Altar of Brides.

The first bride I married before this new altar was, fittingly enough, a young girl from Dallas—Grace Cecile Hatch, whom I had known at St. Matthew's. A short time later I married the beautiful young girl who, as a sort of protegée of Mollie's, was always running in and out of our rectory. This was Ann Harding, a member of Mollie's Thursday Night Club, and an aspiring young actress who had come to New York to make a place on Broadway. I remember how proud Mollie and I were when we attended her debut in Gilbert Emery's *Tarnish,* then went backstage to tell her how

well she had done. After that hit, she went on to *The Trial of Mary Dugan*, in which she achieved a great sensation. She fell in love with her leading man, Harry Bannister, and they asked me to marry them in 1926.

That all brides are beautiful is an old, old truth, but if I may be permitted a certain partiality, I would say that Ann Harding was the most beautiful of all. Her spun-silver hair was so ethereally blond, her features so perfect, her eyes such a shining and heavenly blue! She was really like an angel. There was a sprinkling of Army brass in the church, as well as theatrical people, for her father was an officer.

Time came for the service, and there we were waiting for Ann's mother to appear. Everyone started to worry; but Ann's maid, who knew the family better, just said: "Lah, Miss Ann, there's nothing to worry about. You know your mother—she's just forgotten, that's all!" And so she had. She had absent-mindedly started window-shopping on her way to the church, then forgotten us while she took time out for a small shopping spree!

I remember Bannister was so much in love with Ann that he declared, "All the fame I ever want is to be known as Ann Harding's husband." But when the test really came, and Ann went to Hollywood and became a great movie star, he found this basking in reflected glory too hard to take. He and Ann tried for five years or more to overcome the difficulties of just too much success for one, and not enough for the other. Then a sad little note appeared in the papers:

> We, Harry Bannister and Ann Harding Bannister, are getting a divorce, because, during our three years in the motion picture industry, we have been placed in a position which is untenable.
>
> Due to Harry's constant and generous efforts to forward my interests, often at the expense of his own, he is gradually losing his identity, becoming a background for my achievements, and looked upon as "Ann Harding's husband."
>
> We have decided that the only way for Harry to re-establish

himself in his profession is to cut the Gordian knot, to set forth on his own—quite apart from me—and win his way back to the standing he enjoyed in the theater.

We have found courage to preserve the thing we have in the way that seems best to us.

This was the first Mollie and I knew that the marriage had ended, and we were most distressed. But Ann married again, a musician this time, and the second marriage turned out well. It is not the first time I have noticed that careerists often do better to marry outside their particular profession. Rivalry in business may spur things along, but rivalry in marriage can blow off the roof.

Irene Castle was another stunning bride. And when the late and greatly lamented Robert Sherwood married a niece of Booth Tarkington, the pews were filled with all manner of notables, including Mary Pickford and Douglas Fairbanks and Charlie Chaplin from Hollywood. James Montgomery Flagg and Stephen Leacock were among our bridegrooms, as was General Pershing's nephew, Francis Edwin Pershing, who married Mary Jane Outcault. She was the vivacious young lady whose childhood pranks had inspired her father's famous cartoon strip, the beloved "Buster Brown."

Gossip columns in those days were busy with the rumors of Grace Vanderbilt's engagements. She was the daughter of General Vanderbilt, and the sister of Cornelius Vanderbilt, Jr. She was, of course, one of the richest girls in America—or rather, in Europe, for she lived mostly abroad—and her name had been linked at various times with the Marquis of Donegal, with Prince Alexander Dietrichstein of Austria, with her cousin, Lord Ivor Spencer Churchill, son of Consuelo Vanderbilt, the Duchess of Marlborough, and even with Prince George of England, who later succeeded to the British crown. But Grace Vanderbilt didn't marry any of these. She ducked out of her parents' Fifth Avenue mansion one fine June morning in 1927, to meet Henry Gassaway Davis, III, heir to West Virginia coal mines and utilities; and the two were married in a plain civil ceremony down at City Hall. A traffic policeman and an uncle of the groom were the only two witnesses. Then

the new Mrs. Davis and her husband went to brother Cornelius' apartment, and from there sent word to the family of what she had done.

They waited all day and all evening for some sign from home. Then, at eleven o'clock that night, they came down to the church. I was out at the time, and my curate, the Rev. Culver B. Alford, was rather at a loss what to do. We do not marry elopers—though in this case, the fact that they had already been married by the law made it permissible to go ahead without her parents' consent.

I returned to the church at ten minutes of twelve, and found them still waiting. I married them at once. I still don't know what objections the Vanderbilts had to the marriage—the groom was the grandson of a United States senator and very far from poor—but I do know I felt sorry for this girl who had waited in vain for a word from her parents. And who, for the second time in one day, was married before strangers!

The most conscientious bride I ever married was Ottilie Kruger, Otto Kruger's charming daughter and herself a young actress. Ottilie was determined that she would not repeat any of the service after the clergyman, but would do it all by herself. This was all right with me, but her bridegroom was not an actor and could not learn the lines. He came to me in despair. "Dr. Ray," he said, "you have just got to help me. My future wife is a 'quick study,' but I can't memorize a thing."

"Never mind," I told him, "you leave Ottilie to me." And so when the time came, we let the bride rattle off her half of the service —letter-perfect, by the way, while the groom responded in the old-fashioned way, repeating after me.

There is so much excitement connected with a wedding, so much psychic strain on all the parties involved, that anything can happen. One of the oldest gags in the world is losing the wedding ring, and yet it occurs so often you just wouldn't believe it. And the interesting thing about this, psychologically, is that the ring is often hedged about by the most elaborate and careful precautions against such a loss.

An earnest little man came to the office one day to make his arrangements. The day and hour of the wedding were fixed; then he said to Miss Hanlon, "Would you like to see the ring?" Proudly he took a chamois bag out of his vest pocket and displayed a very expensive platinum ring set with a large diamond.

"It's beautiful," Miss Hanlon said, handing it back. "But aren't you afraid you might lose it?"

"Oh, no—trust me!" he confidently answered, and exhibited a huge safety-pin with which he anchored the chamois bag to the lining of his pocket.

The day before the wedding he came in again to make sure there would be no slip-up of any kind—and again he showed the ring. The safety-pin was still doing its duty.

But on the great day itself, when this same man stood before me with his bride, and with a dozen relatives and friends grouped around, did he still have the ring? Certainly not! When I came to "With this ring I thee wed—" I heard a deathly gasp from the groom and thought he was going to faint. "I-I changed my suit," was all he could stammer—and we finished the service without benefit of ring.

If there is one person at a wedding more nervous than the groom, it is likely to be the best man. When the best man has the ring, it is customary to hold out the prayer book toward him when one reaches this part of the ceremony, and let him place the ring on the open page. But early in my rectorship I learned that there is many a slip between the page and the finger. One day the prayer book managed to tilt in my hand, and the ring bounced to the floor, rolling off merrily under the pews. Every person in the chapel got down and scrambled about. I lost my place in the service and very nearly lost my temper. The poor bride and groom were almost in hysterics. Never, I promised myself, would this happen to me again! So now onto the best man's finger goes the ring until it is needed. I do not even trust him to put it in his pocket—on more than one occasion, we have had to take nail scissors and snip the lining at the bottom of the best man's coattails, in order to retrieve a ring that has

slipped all the way down! No, I trust him with the ring only where I can actually see it. Then, when the time comes, I take it off his finger myself, turn to the altar and bless it, and give it to the groom to put on the bride's finger. Only when I see it safely on her finger do I relax about the ring—I know *she* can be trusted with it!

As a matter of fact, I have seen nervous best men produce everything out of their pockets except a white rabbit. Six weeks after the wedding, one best man came back to the church and asked me timidly, "Would you mind telling me what I gave you after the ceremony?"

"You gave me," I answered, "a small plug of tobacco with a bite out of it."

"That explains it!" he groaned. "Last night for the first time I had occasion to wear that jacket again. In the pocket were two twenty-dollar gold pieces that I was supposed to have given you. Would you be kind enough to accept them now?"

I accepted most gracefully—apologizing only that I could not return the original contribution. I had put it in my desk drawer as a souvenir of my trade, but it had somehow disappeared.

Styles in wedding rings change with the times, as well as with the whims of the jewelers. At one period, the fashion was a thin platinum band for the bride, with a larger gold band for the groom, if two rings were used. Then came the vogue for an all-around diamond circlet for the bride, very pretty and very costly. After that came a return to the old-fashioned gold wedding band, a little on the heavy side. Just now rings are extremely heavy—a gold band for the bride almost half an inch wide, and an even heavier band for the groom. I've seen them so exaggeratedly heavy that I've wondered, on occasion, if I wasn't being handed a pair of brass knuckles.

The two-ring ceremony stems from central Europe, of course, and was never an English or Anglican custom. But during the Second World War, brides wanted their new husbands to wear rings overseas, and so the "matching set" was evolved by the jewelers. Dealers were quick to see the advantage of selling two rings instead of one, and it is obvious that the custom is still being encouraged.

In the original Anglican service, the ring signified the groom's bestowal of all his possessions on the bride—*with this ring I thee wed, and with all my worldly goods I thee endow.* But this endowment has been dropped from the modern service, along with the bride's old promise to obey. Perhaps it is more suitable nowadays to have equality in rings as well as other matters; but, like the observation of Mother's Day and Father's Day and so many other customs that are well enough in themselves, it is being blown up far beyond its actual importance.

Marriage licenses too have a fiendish way of getting lost, and we now insist on that document's being deposited with us the day before the wedding. I shall never forget the best man who, just before the service was about to begin, suddenly remembered that the license was still over in Brooklyn—"inside the icebox"! It seemed that earlier that day, the prospective bride and groom had held a small housewarming in their newly furnished apartment. After one or two champagne toasts to the wedded bliss that was so shortly to begin, the best man became very waggish about the license. "This is really hot stuff!" he cried in alarm. "Let's keep it on ice!" Whereupon he stuck it in the refrigerator, safe among the ice cubes! There it remained, completely forgotten until we asked for it. I could not perform the service until the license was produced—so the whole wedding party had to wait until a flustered best man could get to Brooklyn and back. By which time they were feeling far less festive.

But this was topped by the couple from New Jersey. They had got all the way over here, bridesmaids and all, before the groom made the harrowing discovery that he had "left that awful paper back home in my chiffonier drawer"! To help things along I suggested to the groom's father, "Why don't you call up some friend and ask him to get the paper and bring it over here? It would save a lot of time." So he called a neighbor and told him how to climb up the fire escape, pry open the kitchen window, and get into the apartment. As soon as he found the paper, he was to phone us back.

Ten minutes passed. Then the phone rang—and a voice with a thick Irish brogue asked skeptically if the groom's father was

there. We put him on. "I have here a culprit red-handed," the Irish cop proclaimed. "Caught him, I did, breaking into your house. Tells me, now, some story about a paper, which is all a lot of malarkey, I know. I'm taking him to the station, but first he tells me to give you a ring."

The father hastily assured the policeman that the "thief" was all right—and for goodness sake, let him go quick, so he could come with the license! But the officer was still unconvinced until he could talk to "the Father himself"—meaning me. It was only after Father Ray assured him that the church would take full responsibility in the affair, that he let his prisoner go. I was guilty, I'm afraid, of a small imposition; for I'm sure the good patrolman thought he was talking to a Roman Catholic priest.

So immune to surprise have we become by now, that we do not even turn a hair when animals and pets come along to our weddings! One young bride brought her canary in a cage, insisting that she had no place to leave it in New York, and wanted it with her. It was carried into the church, and from its perch in one of the pews burst into trills and cadenzas when *Lohengrin* was played. Truly, it was quite a pretty effect. Another bride brought her dog, a gay-looking poodle with flowers in his collar, and insisted that he be permitted to witness the ceremony. One of the ushers took him by the leash and led him to the pew in which, as it happened, the groom's mother was sitting. Fido and Mama sat side by side throughout the proceedings and kept each other company.

There was one occasion, however, on which I freely admit I was thrown for a loss. It was a wedding I was conducting a few years after the First World War. The ceremony began. The bride's mother, with great dignity, had placed her daughter's hand in that of the groom. He had just begun to repeat after me: "I, John, take thee, Mary, to be my wedded wife—" when the words died in his throat and, completely collapsing, he sank to the floor! He appeared to be helplessly under the influence of alcohol—simply passed out!

The service came to an abrupt halt as best man and ushers leaped to the groom's assistance, carrying him bodily into the sacristy. The

bride, her mother, and all the bridesmaids followed, while I dismissed the stunned and silenced congregation. Then I too hurried into the sacristy with a bottle of smelling salts.

"It's all my fault!" the best man was mourning. "He was shell-shocked during the war, and was supposed not to drink. On the way down here I talked him into having just one, for a little Dutch courage—and look at the result! I guess the doctors knew what they were saying."

Presently the groom was brought to, utterly miserable at the humiliation he had caused his bride. She was really a trump. She brushed aside his apologies in a wonderfully loyal manner, and said she was perfectly ready to go on with the ceremony. So guests or no guests, we picked up where we had left off—attended only by a rueful best man and a mother-in-law who was still looking daggers!

Another gallant bride was one of the "international set" from the French Riviera. During the Second World War, many roving Americans came scuttling back home for protection, and among them was a charming lady whose name had featured in the society pages for a good many years. She had twice been married, and twice left a widow. I mean a legitimate widow.

One day she came to see me with some friends whom I knew, and asked me to perform a third ceremony for her. She was lovely, not a day over fifty I thought, though of course she had that well-preserved look of those who spend their lives prolonging their youth. The bridegroom, obviously a great deal younger than herself, seemed to qualify mainly as a dancing partner.

The day of the wedding came, and a small and select few gathered before the altar, which was charmingly decorated with candles and lilies. All went well until the kneeling-down for the church's benediction. Alas, when I extended my hand to the bride, to help her rise, she couldn't get up! It took the combined efforts of all of us—the groom, the best man and myself, to get her to her feet!

But she was the greatest good sport I ever have known. Laughingly she said, "Dr. Ray, when you get as old as I am, you can do

a lot for your face and figure, but there is precious little you can do for your knees!" When I returned to the sacristy, I looked at her marriage card. She was seventy-nine! No one would have believed it. And the last I heard, she was back on the Riviera with her dancing partner-husband, still going strong!

CHAPTER XVI

Cannibalistic Mothers—Neglectful Mothers—A New Hat for the Wedding—The Bride Whose Heart Failed Her—Agnes Tufverson Murder Case—A Handful of Bigamists—The Reluctant Little War Bride—The Importance of Kindness in Marriage.

ALTHOUGH we never marry eloping couples, we sometimes wish we had done so when we learn the full circumstances. This is especially so when the obstacle proves to be a possessive parent, usually a mother, who refuses consent out of sheer self-centeredness.

I remember a young woman of twenty-seven who came with her fiancé to discuss her marriage. A date was set, and broken. Her mother disapproved of the young man and wanted her daughter to think it over.

Another date was set, and broken. This went on for weeks. Finally I intervened. "Look," I said to the young woman. "Don't postpone your wedding again. Go ahead and get married. But after you are married, you and your husband take a place by yourselves. Don't live at your mother's, as you had planned."

The morning of the wedding day arrived, and I received a long-distance call from the mother. "The wedding will have to be put off!" she told me arrogantly. "I am not well enough to come."

I assured her we could conduct the wedding without her. I thought she would choke. "After all," I said bluntly, "you cannot go on preventing the marriage forever. They are a nice young couple and well suited to one another. Why do you want to spoil your daughter's life?"

She argued with an energy and persistence perfectly astounding in so chronic an invalid. I stood my ground. Fifteen dollars and seventy-five cents' worth later, she admitted defeat and hung up. I went ahead with the wedding. And here is the beauty of the story—not twelve months later, this same mother met a man in California, married him, and settled down to a very happy second marriage. This I am certain she never would have done had she been able to keep her daughter by her side. She would never have realized that she herself was still an attractive woman with many years of happiness ahead.

Cannibalistic mothers have, in my experience, played an enormous part in preventing, or marring, the marriages of their children. Their motives often seem good—protection of their young—but like everything else in nature, these forces become destructive when carried on beyond their natural limits.

A distressed young woman came to see me one day, an intelligent girl of possibly thirty. "I don't know what to do," she confided. "Perhaps you can help me." She told me that she had been engaged for a number of years, but that every time a date was set for the wedding, her fiancé's mother would become ill and the plans would have to be canceled. "It always ends," she explained, "with his backing out at the last minute, though I know he loves me, and there isn't really a serious obstacle. His mother was left fairly well off, and doesn't need his support."

"Why don't you go to see the mother," I asked, "and try to reach an understanding?"

"I've just come from there," she said. "We both told her we were going to get married soon, and she just went to pieces. It was so bad we had to call a doctor for her. She even said that if we went ahead without her, she would protest the marriage!"

"Well, if you can get the young man to the license bureau," I finally told her, "come here and we will get you married at once." But I doubted if I'd see her.

To my surprise, she showed up several days later, with her bridegroom, some wedding guests—and, of all people, the bridegroom's mother! I married them quickly, to the cheering and festive sounds of the older woman's sobs.

After the ceremony, and while the guests were kissing the bride, the mother turned on me. "You have taken my son away from me!" she said accusingly. "I cannot live without him! I don't know what I'm going to do!"

"I hope," I tried to say kindly, "that you're going to live your own life, as God meant you to do, and let your son live his."

"I suppose I'll have to," she said, with a bitter shake of the head. "You've left me no choice."

In sharp contrast to this type of mother, and almost as bad, is the parent who wants to take no responsibility at all. Two bright-eyed youngsters, obviously eloping, came in one day and wanted to be married. I explained that, because of their youth, I could not marry them without the consent of their parents. I insisted that the girl go home and tell her mother.

The following day the girl's mother came in to see me, a sulky look on her face. "I do wish you had gone ahead and married them without all this fuss!" she reproached me. "I didn't want to give my consent, but if you'd already married them, there'd be nothing I could do about it." She gave an exasperated sigh. "Now you've gone and put all the responsibility right on my shoulders!"

But more often, to my vast relief, parents refuse to countenance these swift marriages to strangers, and call me to say that they are taking the next train to New York to look into the situation. As a rule, the girl breaks into tears when she hears this message. If the groom gets truculent and says, "Very well, we'll go somewhere else and be married before your mother gets here," the girl usually refuses. Belated good sense seems to come to her rescue. "We had better wait," she will say, "and talk it over with Mother."

Sometimes I wish Mother would just go and get lost. I mean the Mother-knows-best kind of female who won't let her daughter tie a bow without her help. I can still see the handsome but domineering woman who sat across this desk one day, with her daughter seated over there in the corner, and told me the kind of wedding *she* would like to have. "I want six bridesmaids," she said, "and about a hundred guests. Lots of flowers, and—well, I've always wanted a big church wedding!"

I turned to the daughter, who sat there quietly twisting her fingers. "And you?" I inquired. "What would you like to have?"

She just shook her head. "I don't care," she said miserably. "It's not my wedding, it's hers!"

The mother raised her voice to drown out further questions. "Now see here, Dr. Ray," she informed me, "I have always looked after my little girl's interests, and I know what she wants. She *thinks* she wants a quiet little wedding with no kind of fuss. How ridiculous! I've been planning this wedding ever since she was born!"

Mother got her own way. It was a "beautiful wedding" with all the orange blossoms and trimmings anybody could have asked for. There was only one hitch. As the moment arrived for the service to start, the bride was there with her attendants, the groom was there with his best man—everyone was there except the bride's parents. The organ played the "Wedding March" over and over, the guests began to fidget, and the poor little bride, almost in tears, kept protesting to the groom, "But I simply can't be married till my parents get here!"

One hour later a taxi drove up—and out of it stepped the bride's parents. The mother was wearing a stunning new hat. "I *am* sorry," she called out breezily with a wave to the groom, "but I simply couldn't come until my milliner arrived!"

We were all of us speechless. The groom's face was such a turkey-gobbler red as I went ahead with the service that I was afraid he might have an apoplectic fit. And it is a matter of record that he would not speak a word to his new mother-in-law for a year and a half. Then it was on the occasion of the christening of their first-born

son, which I performed at the baptismal font in the chapel, not twenty feet away from where I had married them. But who can hold a grudge where a baby is concerned? Even the bride's mother dissolved into tears, and they all kissed and made up.

Miss Hanlon used to say that all any dramatist had to do was sit behind the desk in the Little Church office day after day, and his plots would come to him already written. Certainly we have had our share of the melodramatic—and sometimes of the tragic.

Tragic, surely, was the case of Miss Louise Wyant of McKeesport, Pennsylvania, who had looked forward for twenty years to being a bride at the Little Church Around the Corner, and whose name figured instead in the obituary columns. But let me show you the story as it was written up at the time in the *New York World-Telegram*:

> For years Louise Wyant dreamed of coming to New York to be a bride at the Little Church Around the Corner.
>
> When she was sixteen she began to plan that glamorous bridal day after reading an article about the church in a McKeesport, Pa., newspaper. Magazines also told her of the procession through the years of brides, fashionable and famous, who chose to wed in the quaint old-world landmark in E. 29th St.
>
> At 20 she clung to her dreams, now with the bridegroom selected. He was John Ruoss with whom she had been acquainted all her life, a youth her own age. Circumstances, time and again, delayed the wedding day.
>
> But finally, at 40, Louise Wyant of McKeesport and John Ruoss of Pittsburgh came to Manhattan at last to marry.
>
> They went happily to the marriage license bureau in the Municipal Building yesterday, leaving Louise's mother, Mrs. Annie Wyant, in her suite at the Governor Clinton Hotel. It would be only a little while. They'd be back, all go to lunch, and then—
>
> The ceremony at 1 P.M. at the Little Church Around the Corner.
>
> The pair, their happiness apparently secure, sat down at a

table in the license bureau. Ruoss looked at the other couples. He felt like smiling at everybody. But he turned his attention to the license they must fill out. Looking up a moment, he saw that Louise had gone, that she had left her purse and gloves.

In thirty-five minutes when she did not return, Ruoss asked another prospective bride to look for her.

This young woman came out screaming. There was someone lying on the floor of the ladies' room, she said. Louise Wyant had not lived quite long enough to realize her life's dream. The medical examiner reported her "dead from natural causes."

Yes, she was dead from "natural causes"—too much sheer joy and too much excitement. We waited on for that one o'clock appointment, not knowing what had happened downtown, until the bridegroom called us. "Oh, why didn't we get married years ago," he kept sobbing, "instead of waiting twenty years?" Indeed, why didn't they? Death can take anyone, at any time of life, but meantime they could have shared their happiness together, as well as their problems, and by then have had children, and even grandchildren perhaps. They had been far too overcautious. No one can guarantee completely against the vicissitudes of life—and better this man had been left with a family to struggle for than with empty memories and years of regret.

Another unfortunate bride was the good-looking, self-possessed woman of thirty-five who came to us in early December of 1934 and wanted to be married to a Yugoslav captain. He was a man of smart military bearing, confident manner, and with a very attentive air toward his bride. He had a Viennese accent. She was Agnes Tufverson, brilliant corporation lawyer who had begun her career as secretary to Myron T. Herrick, United States Ambassador to France. She was considered one of the most successful women lawyers in New York, being counsel for the Electric Bond & Share Company in the Wall Street district. Everyone would have said she was a woman more than capable of looking out for herself. Yet, when a person is lonely, what chance has shrewdness or even intelligence?

We married Agnes Tufverson to Captain Ivan Poderjay on December 4, 1934, in a very simple ceremony, and listened to their plans for sailing to Europe on a honeymoon just before Christmas. It was another six months before we heard of them again—and then, surprisingly, through a police inquiry. Miss Olive Tufverson, sister of the bride, had not had a letter in several months and was getting uneasy. She suspected foul play.

What brought the Little Church into the Tufverson murder case, which shortly was plastered all over page one, was that when the police caught up with Captain Poderjay in Europe, he denied having married Miss Tufverson at all. We, of course, supplied proof that he had, and that he had laid claim to being a bachelor at the time of the marriage. Actually, as it developed, he already had a wife in Europe, so the marriage of this poor woman was a bigamous marriage, and meant nothing at all.

But in all probability, she never knew that. Agnes Tufverson was dead by the time she embarked on her honeymoon to England—carried aboard ship in the black trunk that Poderjay ordered taken to his stateroom. She had been murdered for her money, some twenty thousand dollars, all of which she had withdrawn from the bank before sailing. She had spent a thousand dollars on a trousseau, most of which the captain had taken to Vienna and presented to his legitimate wife.

But not all of our bigamists have been villains, or men. Shortly after the last war, a most attractive young woman came to us to be married to an English army officer. She was American, and they had met, they explained, while she was a volunteer on overseas duty. They both seemed ecstatically happy—until just before the marriage ceremony. Then, for no apparent reason whatever, the bride broke away from us, ran to the bow window which forms a recess in the rectory office, and began to cry bitterly. The groom was amazed. "I don't understand it," he told us apologetically, "I've seen her in air raids during the blitz, but she never acted like this. I suppose it's just nerves." He went to the girl and put his arm around her shoulders, and after a few moments she dried her eyes

and turned back to us. We provided a couple of witnesses for them, since they had come in alone.

One week later, a United States officer strode into the office. He was an older man, accustomed to command. "Do you recognize this young woman?" he demanded of the secretary, plumping a silver-framed photograph down on the desk.

The secretary examined the photograph, feeling that the young girl depicted there looked vaguely familiar. Meantime, she asked the routine question: "Are you a relative of hers?"—for we like to know what we are giving information *for*.

"Yes, she is my wife!" came the unexpected answer. And then the secretary recognized the young woman as the bride who had so unaccountably broken down just before the ceremony. No wonder she had given way to such a case of "nerves"! She was about to commit bigamy.

It seems the young wife had gone overseas, while her husband was on duty in another theater of war, and had never notified anyone. He had supposed her quietly at home, and just careless about writing, while actually she had been driving an ambulance in England! There she had met this young English officer, and they had fallen in love. When she slipped back to this country, he came searching for her, and, supposing her single, persuaded her to marry him. I do not know what kind of reasoning led her to go as far as our altar—but I do know that, even before her first husband exposed her, she had found it impossible to go on with the deception. On the night of the marriage, she confessed the truth to her Englishman. Shocked and disillusioned, he left her at once.

It is easy for any clergyman to be trapped into performing a bigamous marriage, provided the license appears to be in order. One young couple was married by me just before the soldier-husband was shipped off to England. When the war was over, he came back eagerly to his wife, and they set up housekeeping. Then one day an English girl appeared on the doorstep, baby in arms. He had married her too—only this time it was some Anglican rector who had been handed a license full of misleading statements. All it takes

is a little perjury. And a willingness, afterwards, to spend some years in jail.

But wartime is always open season on marriage. I dread war, not only for its military aspects, but also for the cruel things it does to young lives. People marry so hurriedly—an embrace, and they are parted! Will they have anything in common when next they meet again?

I have in mind another young soldier who came hurrying home from overseas, this time from Korea. He could hardly wait for the boat to dock, so he could see the young wife to whom I had married him just after he was drafted. And there she was, waiting. But instead of greeting him with outstretched arms, she pushed him away from her and looked at him coldly.

"What's the matter?" he asked, trying to kiss her. "Come on, let's get away from these people. Let's go home."

"You're not going home with me," she said flatly. "You might as well know now. I haven't been true to you while you were away. I'm sorry to let you down like this, but it's the only honest thing to do. I want a divorce."

The young husband was staggered. "But you can't—" he protested. "You simply can't do this!" Then, his voice rising in hysteria, "I'll kill the man, whoever he is! I'll kill him! I'll kill him!" But he didn't. The next day he put a pistol to his head and murdered himself.

Young people often do not realize how cruel they can be, when they pride themselves they are being "straightforward and honest." Truth is a thing that can cut like a dagger. I have always felt that this particular tragedy might never have happened, had a little less "honesty" and a little more honest kindness gone into the breaking of the terrible news.

For what is kindness, after all? It is mostly imagination—the ability to know how the other person may feel. If I could write another Beatitude I would say: *Blessed are those who have kindness, for they shall be cherished like angels while yet in this world.*

And how much of our unhappiness, in marriage and otherwise, could be avoided by a little unselfish good will! Again, during the war, I was called on to perform one of those whirlwind marriages, with the groom just about to be shipped somewhere overseas. He had found he had about four or five days, and had wired his fiancée to come on from the West Coast and be married at once. And hurry! There was no time to waste.

Travel being what it was in wartime, the girl came by train, upper berth, and arrived the morning of her wedding, after three days of strenuous travel, completely exhausted. There was no time for her to rest. The groom rushed her to the license bureau; then to get a waiver; then he and his best man, whom the girl had never met, brought her to the church.

I was waiting in my office when a distracted groom burst into the room. "Are you ready to be married?" I asked, looking up. "Ready!" he scoffed. "What do you think of women? She says now she won't marry me!"

I suggested that they all come into the office for a while, and soon two flustered young officers were escorting in a young girl whose tear-stained face was drawn with fatigue. It was obvious that she was so exhausted, physically and nervously, that the very thought of marriage simply appalled her. "I don't want to be married!" she sobbed into her handkerchief. "I want to go home!"

"But, of course," I reassured her. "I wouldn't dream of marrying you if you're not in love!"

"But I *am* in love!" she wailed. "I just don't want to get married!"

It was difficult not to smile. "Well, you needn't be married today," I replied. "Suppose you wait until you've had a good rest."

The bridegroom intervened. His jaw thrust out stubbornly. "We've only got two days left," he declared. "If she won't marry me today, I won't marry her at all! She can go home and stay there!"

They were both so much in love, and both so angry, that the situation was extremely entertaining for the onlooker. But not for them. "You act like a brute!" she exclaimed. "You act like a ninny!"

he came back. It was obvious we were not getting anywhere, and so I sent them all away. "When you *want* to be married," I told the girl, "I will be very glad to marry you. Not until then."

About six o'clock that same evening they returned. The girl's face was radiant above the fresh orchid pinned to her shoulder. I performed the ceremony; but after I had declared them man and wife, I asked the young husband to come with me to my study.

"Look here, young man," I said when we were alone, "I'm old enough to be your father. I want to talk to you. You say you have only two days, but in those two days you can ruin a lifetime of happiness. Remember that. Your generation all seem to know everything, but no matter how sophisticated you appear to be, your wife has had very little experience. You must be kind in your relationship to her. Any rudeness or impetuosity on your part now may spoil your marriage entirely. Be kind, and be gentle. Now go back to your wife and protect her with your love."

He gulped pretty hard, but he didn't tell me to go mind my own business. A few days later I received a letter sent from his ship, in which he told me that he was on his way across, and she was returning home to California to await his return. *Thank you for the advice*, he had carefully underlined—they were both very happy, and utterly in love.

And they still are in love. I would like to have engraved inside every wedding band, *Be kind to one another.* This is the Golden Rule of marriage, and the secret of making love last through the years.

CHAPTER XVII

Divorce and How I Feel about It—The Case of the Perjured Bride—Eugenie Bankhead—Marjorie Post Hutton Davies—The Charge of Infidelity—A Patient Griselda—Planned Parenthood.

I WROTE A BOOK IN 1944 called *Marriage Is a Serious Business.* In it I said: "Ideally and practically, marriage must be a permanent relation between one man and one woman. That is the old-fashioned idea, and it is old-fashioned marriage I am discussing, because it is the only satisfactory, enduring type of marriage, the union on whose permanence and stability is based the permanence and stability of the whole social structure in which we live."

Well, opinions change. I would still use the word *ideally* in that passage. But *practically,* alas, I have been forced to recognize that marriage does not always turn out to be a "permanent relation between one man and one woman." For a whole hornet's nest of reasons—private, social, economic, and moral—some marriages fail. What are we to do about it? What are we ministers, as men of God, to do about this discrepancy between the ideal and the reality: things as they should be, and things as they are?

We know where the Church stands. The Church of England has stated unequivocably and on countless occasions that it will not countenance the marriage of a divorced person. This was what

forced the abdication of the now Duke of Windsor, for as King of England he was also head of the Church. It was because he was head of the Church that it was unthinkable he should marry a woman who had been divorced, and not, as so many Americans thought, because Wallis Warfield Simpson was a commoner. It was the same consideration that occasioned all the to-do about Princess Margaret and Captain Peter Townsend. My phone, incidentally, kept ringing all through the weeks of that crisis, with some news agency or reporter wanting to know my "prediction" on what the outcome would be. How should I know? I have no private lines into Windsor Castle, and I was forced to inform them that all I knew about the case was what I read in the papers.

The Church of England took up its position on divorce four hundred years ago when Henry VIII caught the roving glance of Anne Boleyn and decided he was living in sin, because he was married to his deceased brother's wife. The marriage was annulled; and since that time, the Anglican Church has recognized only one ground for annulment: the law of consanguinity. This means, in brief, that if you can prove you have married your brother's wife by mistake—or your grandmother by oversight—you can get your union dissolved. No other grounds.

I am not concerned, except in theory, with what the Church of England does. But what the Protestant Episcopal Church in America does is quite another matter. I have married as many couples as any man living. Probably more. Because of its romantic setting, Transfiguration early became *the* New York church in which to be married. When a metropolitan newspaper asked the manager of a rubberneck bus line what sights out-of-towners asked most to see, he named them in this order: 1, the Brooklyn Bridge; 2, the Statue of Liberty; 3, the Little Church Around the Corner. To many people from faraway places, it was the only New York church they had heard of. To others, it was just the most fashionable place—ever since Mrs. Stuyvesant Fish took her vows at our altar.

After Mrs. Stuyvesant Fish came all the theater celebrities—the

Drews, the Wallacks, the Hollands, and the Davenports. Runaway couples of the *fin de siècle* almost inevitably ran to our door, and the first Dr. Houghton was much too kindly to turn anyone away. But with the twentieth century, the second Dr. Houghton, foreseeing that an abuse of marriage banns would simply turn the church into another Gretna Green, began to demand the approval of parents. I am afraid to this day the impression persists that the Little Church is an easy place in which to get married, whereas nothing could be further from the truth. Roman Catholics often turn to us after failing to meet the requirements of their own church, only to find our rules are every bit as strict. It finally became necessary for us to ask the City Clerk's office at City Hall to post a notice on its wall warning bridal couples of our stiff rules. It seemed only fair to save them the trip.

The Church of the Transfiguration WILL NOT:

1. Marry any person under 21 without the consent of the parents.
2. Marry a runaway couple, or elopers.
3. Marry a divorced person or persons (unless the previous marriage was ecclesiastically annulled).
4. Marry persons who have not been baptized. [Nowadays, however, it is acceptable if only one of the couple has been baptized—this to permit of mixed-faith marriages.]

All this means, in effect, that we turn away many more people than we marry. The second Dr. Houghton turned away over a hundred couples a month, as he recorded in his diary. We turn away more. Some of this is justified, as in the case of runaway couples, since "to marry in haste is to repent at leisure." But when it comes to denying divorced persons the blessing of the church in remarriage, I am sharply at variance with what I have to practice.

The Protestant Episcopal Church in America follows the Catholic and Anglican lead in regard to divorce, except that having no single head, such as the Pope or the Archbishop of Canterbury, each

bishop is called upon to interpret the matter in his own way. This makes for a situation where actual practice not only varies from diocese to diocese, but where those with special influence may hope for special favor. You will note I say *hope*, not *receive*. But it is an unsatisfactory situation. I constantly get phone calls from bishops or rectors in other parts of the country, asking if some of their communicants, denied remarriage at home, may be married by us. The answer is no: the rules in New York are the hardest of all.

The shocking part of this picture is that, between the Roman Catholic and Episcopal churches, fully fifty per cent of those asking to be married today are turned away from Christian altars! It is not that people have turned away from Christian marriage, but that the churches have denied them. They are forced to go to City Hall, to take the most important vows of their life amid uninspiring surroundings—or, and let my colleagues take note, they must turn to other denominations. And having turned to these churches with a more tolerant attitude, why shouldn't they remain there? There they have been greeted as human beings who have already suffered, and not as ecclesiastical outcasts, expected to do penance for the rest of their lives.

When I was a young man, the letter and the law of the Church seemed very important. Religious rites and observances, services and celebrations, were matters of deep concern. I spent a great deal of my time seeing that the beautiful mass of the Episcopal Church was properly performed, with care and punctilio, and that all the candlesticks and brass were lovingly shined. I still think these things are important in their place, but none of them is as important as the spirit of Christ which dwells within our hearts. Christ said to forgive. Christ said clearly, "Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us." And it seems to me very inconsistent of the Church that it should tell our people they can find forgiveness in Christ for anything they do—even, if need be, for the heinous crime of murder—and yet never hope to be pardoned for the unfortunate error of having married the wrong person! Surely, failure in marriage is not a cardinal sin.

In my opinion, this attitude of the Church is backward and blind. Worse still, I'd like to say, it's just a bit hypocritical. Every rector has many good communicants who have been married more than once. We are not permitted to marry them, but there is no rule that says, having gone elsewhere to be married, they cannot return the following Sunday and join in Communion. In short, we do not repudiate these "sinners" for good; we do not deny them the future comforts of the Church. Why, therefore, do we persist in our medieval attitude?

Some people will go to astonishing lengths to be married in a church, and to obtain the Church's blessing, even though they are fully aware that they are not entitled to it under prevailing restrictions. There was a striking example of this just a few months ago. A television executive came with his intended bride to arrange for their wedding. The girl was a dancer. She said she intended after marriage to give up the stage, and we all had a very pleasant conversation about their plans for the future.

Then came the Sunday set for the wedding. All the guests arrived, including the maid of honor and the father of the bride. But not the bride or groom!

I decided, for once, to fill out the wedding license while we were waiting—a thing I had never done before, and never will again. The license bureau keeps close watch of its documents, and we have to return every license we receive. But in view of the fact that here was a church full of people in festive array, and that even the reception had been arranged for afterward, I felt perfectly safe.

I had just finished signing the certificate myself when the maid of honor walked in. "Here," I said, indicating a line, "you sign here."

"B-but," she began to stammer, "I don't think there's going to be any wedding!"

"No wedding?" I gasped. "Why?"

"I just got hold of the bride's mother on the phone," she said. "The bride has disappeared. So has the groom. Nobody knows where they are—everyone's looking all over the city."

Well, here was a pretty kettle of fish. I'd been left waiting at the altar before, but never without *either* of the principal parties. We all cooled our heels from three-thirty to five. Finally, at five o'clock, came another report from the bride's mother. Her daughter had returned home and gone to bed ill. There would be no wedding. In time, the truth came out. The girl had been divorced and had perjured herself at the license bureau. She feared exposure—which, of course, she got with a vengeance, for the tabloids picked up the story and shrieked it to the world. And I had to call City Hall and explain how I happened to fill out a license when no ceremony was performed.

My friend down at the license bureau burst into laughter. "Why, Dr. Ray," he said, "that is one of the funniest stories I've ever heard."

"Well, it isn't funny to me," I retorted. "Anything but!" I had nothing worse than a damaged license to contend with—for all I knew there might also be involved a pair of damaged lives.

It is not, you understand, that I *approve* of divorce. Indeed, I have spent much of my life trying to help others avoid it, and to this end all people who come to us to be married are interviewed beforehand. The Dr. Houghton who preceded me found it sufficient to put his arm around the groom's shoulder and say, "Be kind to her, boy." Then he would turn to the bride and say, "Take good care of *him.*" Fifty years ago this was deemed an adequate, and even touching, benediction. But today a good many of the young things I marry are better versed in Freud than I am, and a good part of my job is to find out how serious they are and what are their intentions.

Even during the Judge Lindsey era of the twenties, when "trial marriage" was quite respectable in sophisticated quarters, I refused to marry anyone who did not regard the marriage contract as a contract for life. Living together is hazardous enough without the added handicap of "merchandise returnable." It often takes years, and the best will on both parts, for two people to accept each other fully, and be happy about it. So one of my first considerations must

be whether or not both parties to the contract mean business from start, and if they are mature enough to try to work out their problems as they arise. Romantic elopements are usually kid stuff. Romeo and Juliet, in my opinion, wouldn't have lasted a year.

Of course, there are exceptions to all of our rules. A young man in deep distress rushed into the rectory office one day and gasped out to Mrs. Smith: "Can someone come with me to perform a wedding at once? She may die any moment!" We then heard the old, old, but always tragic story of unmarried love, pregnancy, malpractice. Now, too late, the couple wanted to legitimize their love. Under such circumstances, we naturally waive our usual delay, and within fifteen minutes the dying girl had been united to her husband, so soon to be a widower.

When we see how deeply a young girl, no matter how "advanced," yearns to have her position secured by the law and by the Church, we begin to understand the ancient wisdom of marriage. It is not a relationship to be entered into lightly, nor cast off without very grievous provocation. Yet there are times when divorce is the only answer possible.

But what of the children?

What of them, indeed? Is it fair to expose them to drunkenness, hysteria, bickering, until their impressions of the world are totally warped? Or is it better for them to learn compromise early in life, in a healthier environment? I have never known a situation that was torment for adults to be good for children.

But people who fail once in marriage will repeat their mistakes. Not necessarily. A person, after divorce, must try to gain a better understanding of himself, and individuals frequently learn from their mistakes, in spite of the pessimists. I am happy to say I have seen some very successful second marriages follow on miserable and disastrous firsts.

Divorce is here to stay, and our best hope of reducing its inroads is to facilitate better and more successful marriages. I think the Church is placing a heavy handicap on itself by refusing to help,

rather than hindering, in this matter. There was once a time when girls married at sixteen, and at that age were about as emotionally mature as they ever would be. The first bride at Transfiguration, as I have pointed out, was just seventeen, a normal age for those days. But nowadays a girl of seventeen may be a wizard at her school work, and even ready for college, yet still remain a child in emotions. She may not reach maturity until well into her twenties. If, in the meantime, she should blunder into a serious mistake in marriage, do you imagine she is going to throw good years after bad, as her grandmother might have done? With any kind of spunk, she will go out and get a job, make a career for herself, and even support her children if need be! And I say that for the Church to forbid such a woman, or a man in similar plight, to marry again, is deliberately to adopt a tongue-in-cheek attitude. Of course they will marry again! And they ought to be able to marry with self-respect, before a consecrated altar, holding their heads high before God and the community.

This is how I feel about the matter—yet never have I violated the commands of my Church. I have been a good soldier. True, I did remarry Eugenie Bankhead, the "beautiful" member of Tallulah's family, after her divorce in 1928. But she married the same man she had married the first time—Morton Hoyt, brother of Nancy Hoyt the novelist and of Elinor Wylie the poet. They had been married eight years, and divorced eight months, when they came to me on the morning before Christmas in 1928 and asked me to unite them in marriage again. Naturally, no "adultery" is involved in remarrying the same spouse, so I gladly rejoined them. This goes down in the calendar as a "reconciliation marriage." I felt quite complacent about it—until it happened again. Eugenie and Morton Hoyt were divorced so many times that his mother testily remarked, "They ought to go and buy a house in Reno." Eventually, however, the charm wore off, and they both married other people. But I never performed a ceremony for them beyond that second marriage.

On another occasion, I was forced to refuse a lady for whom I had high personal regard This was Marjorie Post Hutton, who

helped us so much here at the church during the Depression, and whose work with the breadlines I will describe later. She was an extremely wealthy woman, heiress to the General Foods fortune, and accustomed to getting everything she wanted; yet I knew her as a person to be very warm and generous. However, when she came to me in 1935 and asked me to marry her to Joseph E. Davies, I had to refuse. "But, Marjorie, you know it's impossible," I protested. "You've been married three times!"

She argued and pleaded. "This time it is different," she assured me. "This one will last. It is the love of my life." I still had to refuse; I had no alternative. At last she went away, and they found a minister of some other denomination to perform the ceremony. A few months later, Marjorie sailed off to Russia as an ambassador's wife, and I am sure she was happy. But the last time I was in Florida, she came sailing into port on her fabulous yacht—single again. There is something very pathetic to me about these wandering heiresses, the Doris Dukes and Barbara Huttons and others of great wealth, who try and try again, and never seem to find happiness. Mammy Liza used to say, "When poverty walks in the door, love flies out the window." Probably the same might be said of too many riches.

I sometimes shock my parishioners, I fear, by cautioning them not to exalt the Seventh Commandment above all the others. It is only one of ten. Few people realize that our tendency to make sexual morality the sole test of virtue is due to St. Paul. Christ himself was much more lenient about sex than he was about the meaner aspects of human nature—hypocrisy, cruelty, avarice. Again, I am not making light of self-control or fidelity, important virtues in marriage, but I would like to stress that marriage has other elements just as vital as the choosing of a bedmate. There is a spiritual side to marriage, and when the spiritual side is dead, the marriage is dead also.

Here in New York, our state divorce laws make a travesty of chastity and even of self-respect. With adultery the only grounds for divorce, we have constant collusion, with trumped-up charges and faked bedroom scenes for evidence. Everyone knows this, includ-

ing the judges, yet the law is not changed. All this tends to highlight adultery as the chief cause for divorce, which is simply not so. Rarely, in fact, is unfaithfulness alone the reason for failure in marriage. Other causes precede it—incompatibility, selfishness, emotional immaturity. Unfaithfulness, like a headache, is usually a symptom, almost never a cause.

I once heard a woman declare: "There's just one thing I would never forgive Henry—if he went with another woman." Well, if Henry made a habit of such practices, she might have been right. But I have known wives who would have regarded it as their Christian duty to stick by husbands who had violated all the Ten Commandments but this one—and who would have left like a shot if the Seventh were involved. This is certainly a distorted sense of values.

And incidentally, if a moral lapse is not in itself just grounds for divorce, how much less is it a satisfactory basis for marriage! I had a young girl come to me one day to arrange for her wedding. She was in such a reluctant mood about it that I began to ask questions. She was evasive at first, but finally the unhappy child put her head on my desk and burst into tears. She had been intimate with this young man, she confessed, and felt she *had* to marry him or she would be ruined for life. She no longer loved him, or in fact even liked him. The whole thing had been a disappointing and wretched mistake. She wished she were dead!

Ruined for life! I wish we would just wipe this phrase out of our moral vocabulary—it is vicious and untrue. I told this hysterical young girl that the most certain way to ruin her life was to go ahead with the marriage. She looked at me in amazement—then burst into tears again from sheer joy and relief. It was the first time anyone had told her that her whole life lay before her and that she was not condemned to endless penance because of one error. Cynics who say that the present generation is not hampered by such old-fashioned ideas of morality, should talk to any social worker or divorce-court judge. The truth is that many women who have slipped

before marriage would not marry the man if they dared to refuse. But they are afraid of social obloquy, and frequently well-meaning parents have made the situation worse by insisting on marriage.

I most sincerely hope that no parent reading these pages will ever be confronted with the upsetting problem of what to do under such circumstances. But if it should ever happen, keep these things in mind. Don't run for the shotgun. Don't rant and rave. Don't get hurt and act resentful. Don't ask God, in audible tones, what you have done to deserve such an offspring! And don't retreat into your dignity. Your first important job is to gain your child's confidence and talk the thing out. Before you take it for granted that marriage is the one and only solution, try to find out if the two involved are in love. Some girls will protest they are in love when they are not, because they think that love at least provides some excuse for their behavior whereas sexual curiosity, often the real motivation, will simply bring heavier censure down on their heads. The only way you can get at the truth is to be grown-up about it. If you belong to a church, it might be a good thing for you to go and talk to your minister. If he can do nothing else for you, he can at least help you to a calmer and more balanced state of mind.

When you have learned all the facts, you can make up your mind what you think you ought to do. If the young people are in love and want to get married, then the faster it is done the better for all concerned. But if the answer is otherwise—and particularly if the other young sinner involved is someone you would not want in your family under ordinary circumstances—then, in the name of reason, do not insist on marriage! This is jumping from the frying pan into the fire. This is sentencing your child to punishment for life. Oh yes, ideally speaking, I wish all young people could come to the altar with their dreams and experiences pure and intact—I think they would be happier for it. But realistically speaking, let me point out that the loss of virginity is not *in itself* sufficient grounds for marriage. There must be other considerations—love, respect, mutual enjoyment, companionship, the wish for home and children: the same requirements, in fact, that apply to any other marriage.

To my way of thinking, mental cruelty is one of the evilest things in the world. I mean real mental cruelty, not merely the blanket charge of a Reno divorce court. The unyielding antagonism of one person can make a marriage hell, even when the couple is perfectly adjusted physically. That is why I repeat so often the injunction: *Be friends*. Of all relationships, this is the most enduring and most satisfying.

Dr. Joseph Collins, who wrote many books, was an old friend of mine. He always said, "The unforgivable sin in matrimony is to hamper and obstruct the self-realization of the partner." To this I fully subscribe. In the careless years before the Depression, there was a certain young woman who had married a man of great wealth. She was pretty and gentle, easily swayed by her husband's frowns and smiles. But she struck me as pallid and lifeless. Her husband was a domineering man, insensitive and egotistic, and permitted no one, his wife least of all, to question his infallibility. "I have decided that we will go to such-and-such a party," he would announce, without consulting her wishes. "I want you to look your best. I don't care to be criticized by my friends who think I have married beneath me." She cringed, but made no protest. "I don't want to hurt your feelings," he went on, "but as long as I am willing to pay for the best clothes on the market, you can at least try to wear them properly."

Several times, at these elaborate affairs, I caught sight of this patient Griselda, more magnificently dressed than any other woman in the room, but standing like a robot, fearful of his disapproval, pathetically eager for an indication that he was pleased with her. Time passed, and they were divorced. Then one afternoon some years later, I met her with her second husband, a man without wealth, but with love and understanding to give her. I did not recognize her at first. The pallid, frightened woman had vanished, and here was a radiant creature with a charming personality that had been so submerged before that no one suspected its existence.

Since I know that, as things stand today, I shall have only one chance at marrying my young brides and grooms, I try to fortify

them as well as I can with parental advice. I don't talk about sex. Experience indicates that sex instruction serves no purpose when given to a couple on the point of marriage. They resent it as a sermon and an uncalled-for intrusion. I fall back on the several excellent books on this subject, written by doctors, which I freely recommend.* I suggest that they be read separately before marriage, and afterward together, for both should be intelligent and informed about the physical side of marriage. Of course, the place to teach children these things, in the right way, is not in the church or the schoolroom, though both the Church and school may aid in the teaching. The right place for such teaching is the home, the right teachers are the parents, and it should begin when the child first begins to ask questions. Frankness, without prudery or false shame, is the healthy way to handle sex; and the child should be told just as much, and not more, than he can understand at the time.

I am careful to make sure that my young husbands and wives know about the Planned Parenthood methods that the Archbishop of Canterbury approved a number of years ago and urged our people to observe. I have worked with Margaret Sanger through the many years of her efforts to establish birth control, and am gratified that it has now become a fairly common practice. As a rule, young people have already discussed this matter between them, and reached an understanding. The modern trend is for the young wife to work two or three years until the home is established, then to stop work when the babies arrive. Our standard of living is a high one, and the marriage has a better chance of lasting when there is reasonable comfort than when babies arrive with such frequency as to cause financial distress.

Which reminds me that we had a large wedding party in the office one day, crowding around the desk while Miss Hanlon looked over the license and the necessary papers. "Why, look here," she said laughing, pushing the license back toward the groom, "the clerk at

* *Ideal Marriage,* by Theodoor Van De Velde, M.D.; *Sexual Side of Marriage,* by M. J. Exner, M.D.; *Sex Technique in Marriage,* by Isabel Emslie Hutton, M.D.; *A Marriage Manual,* by Drs. Hannah and Abraham Stone.

the license bureau must have made a mistake. He's given you such a ridiculous middle name—it looks like Enough!"

"It is Enough," said the groom. "I was my mother's seventh child. Also her last one!" (Apparently, his mother had finally discovered a plan of her own.)

CHAPTER XVIII

Five Rules for a Happy Marriage.

MANY MAGAZINES AND PERIODICALS have asked me from time to time for my "Rules for Happy Marriage." We live in an age which seems peculiarly susceptible to "keys" and "magic formulas." Most of this is nonsense. Everything we need to know, actually, to live the good life, can be said in three words: *Love one another.* If we ponder the meaning of those words until they sink into our consciousness, and become a part of our tissue, we can create our own paradise right here on this earth. But if you would like to know what I consider some fundamental pointers, they go something like this:

1. *Have a common goal for your marriage, with blueprint and plan.*

No livable house was ever built without a blueprint, and no successful life without some kind of goal. I have known young people to spend hours studying pictures in magazines and traipsing through furniture departments, trying to plan the kind of apartment or house they want to live in. That is perfectly fine. But what kind of family architecture do they want to occupy for life? Do they want a career

life, with lots of separate space, or do they want an old-fashioned marriage with a hearth and children around it?

I would like to see each young couple sit down and sketch out a plan of where they hope to be in one year's time, five years' time—then into the decades. I don't mean wild dreaming, but actual planning. This kind of planning ought to deal with business or profession, family and friends, home and community. It should not be a too rigid plan, so that a sense of frustration sets in at the first delay or failure, but it should be zestful enough to keep the appetite keen. I have long noticed that young people who feel they are *going* somewhere together have the most fun out of marriage, therefore love each other more, and make the best parents. I love to hear young people talk, talk, talk about the things they want, and the things they hope to do, and how they are going to get them and do them; the more talk the better. The thing I dread is when they stop talking, for then they stop hoping; and when they stop hoping, the road is dark ahead. The older generation, the parents and in-laws, should never throw a wet blanket over this young enthusiasm. Dreams belong to youth—and it is with the dreams of youth that the race progresses a bit with each generation.

2. *Watch your everyday acts, and let the big occasions take care of themselves.*

It's a curious thing about people, that they are apt to die much better than they live. Everyone is struck by the magnificent spirit of soldiers, and even of civilians, in wartime. People who never have shown the slightest sign of gumption or courage can turn into heroes in the twinkling of an eye. But unhappily, it's the dull, daily routine that counts in the end—it's the day after day that makes up a life.

It is my opinion that every home ought to have at least two mirrors: one in the kitchen where the wife can see if her hair is still screwed up in curlers, and one in the hall so that the husband can see the look on his own face when he comes home at night. For the fiber of a marriage is made up of looks and expressions, bright smiles

or frowns, small intonations in greetings, and changes in voice. Marriage is made up of the way you *treat* one another, day in and day out, and not of heroic self-sacrifices, or whether or not you would be willing to lay down your life. Marriage, if you insist, is made up of trivialities, and it's how you handle these trivialities that will dictate whether you celebrate your golden anniversary—or your final decree. Just keep a careful watch on the tiny, "unimportant," everyday behavior that characterizes your home, and the crises of marriage will take care of themselves. You'll find they've been prepared for.

3. *Have equal rights financially.*

One hundred years ago the man of the family handled all the cash money—he also did all the marketing. Daniel Webster used to sally forth at dawn, with his market basket on his arm, to pick out the lettuce and pork chops to be served at his table. No woman went shopping with a purse full of money—if she picked out some "stuff" for a gown, or some ribbons for a bonnet, the shopkeeper sent the bill to the house, to be paid in due course by her lord and master. But the choosing of all furniture and household equipment, from napkins to radishes, devolved upon the man as head of the house, and was one of his chores.

Few men would be willing to turn back the clock today and do all the marketing. But some would like to hang on to the purse strings. It cannot be done. Women have long ago learned how to count and make change, and can be trusted to manage the family finances, in most cases, as well as their husbands. Almost every young woman getting married today has worked for a living in some sort of capacity, and has handled her own wages. It is fantastic to suppose that she is going to be satisfied with anything less than absolute equality in handling family finances—which is only her right.

There is danger, in fact, in the woman's not knowing what the financial score is, in terms of her family. There is no use in "urging economy" if the need for economy is not clearly understood. Debts

can be serious, and the best way to avoid them is to have all the accounting open and above-board. I have seen more than one marriage begin to go on the rocks when one partner got the impression that the other was holding out on money. This is quite intolerable, in a relation so dependent on confidence and trust as marriage.

In fact, I even frown on an "allowance" for the wife, as being too reminiscent of an allowance for the children. The wife is a partner, not a servant or inferior, and she should have equal access to bank accounts and checkbooks and so on. I counsel my young newlyweds to have a complete session of accounting at least once a month, with a mutual discussion, so they will both know exactly where the household budget stands.

4. *Mind your manners. Courtesy is the guardian angel of love.*

I think laxity in manners has killed more romance than any other failing in human experience. During the period of courtship, everyone puts his best foot forward and is on his best behavior. The man remembers to rise when his lady-love enters the room, to hold out a chair for her, to remove his hat in elevators, to smile at the waiter, and to act as though he had been brought up indoors and were thoroughly house-broken. His fiancée, on her part, is always sweet-tempered, never snarls at salesgirls, has her hair always combed, and looks enraptured with interest when her escort says, "Did I tell you about the time we played Notre Dame?" But when the honeymoon is over, a sudden sea-change can come over these manners. The man is revealed as a great oaf who can, and does, make an embarrassing scene when the waiter is slow. He shaves only on the days he goes to the office—otherwise no one is around to see his stubble but his wife. He drops his clothing all over the house—she can pick it up, can't she? And he yawns out loud at the table when his wife is telling about the neighbor next door.

And the wife too begins to gnaw away at the marriage. She slops around the house all day in old slippers, and doesn't bother to

change before her husband comes home. She starts to complain of not having a washing-machine like the ones in the ads—and doesn't seem to notice the whine that imperceptibly creeps into her voice. She slaps the milk bottle down on the table just as it is—why bother to pour it in a pitcher unless company is coming? Why bother for *him*?

Let's face it. Why do we take extra pains for company and strangers? Not so much to pay respect to them, though that may be part of it, but primarily so that they will have a high opinion of *us*. We want to keep up appearances. Yet these all-important appearances are apt to be among the first fatalities of a happy married life. Two people are so much in love that they feel nothing they can do can shock the other, or repel, or disgust. And that is as it should be. But as time goes on, and familiarity wears off that first fine rapture, it is time for good manners and restraint to step in. The husband as well as the wife must remain lovable. And likable. And the test is not how chic and amiable she may appear in public, or how good-looking and poised he may seem with company, but what picture they present to each other when they are alone.

"Thank you" is a phrase that should be employed at least twelve times a day in any average home. "My dear," and similar terms of endearment, should be in daily usage, for sweet-talk, as we call it down South, can make life very pleasant and serves as a honey to flavor our days. In short, *be polite*. Your very best behavior is none too good for those who share your life.

5. *Be kind.*

I repeat this again. Kindness is the life's blood, the elixir of marriage. Kindness makes the difference between passion and *caring*. Kindness is tenderness. Kindness is love, but perhaps greater than love. When you are kind to another, you treat him with delicacy and great understanding. You say in effect: "I see into your heart. Let us make this day as happy as we can for one another." Kindness is *good will*. Kindness says, "I want you to be happy." Kindness

comes very close to the benevolence of God. It grows and grows with the maturity of marriage.

And on top of all this, I have one final bit of advice that I like to give on parting. *"Now, don't both get mad at the same time!"* It may be an old one, but it's probably the most important rule of the lot.

CHAPTER XIX

Some Famous Funerals—St. Joseph's Chapel—Funeral of O. Henry—Victor Shankey—A Doctor Shot Dead—"The Heiress" —The Two Booths—Amelia Bingham—Grace Griswold—Dustin Farnum—Mary Shaw—Minnie Maddern Fiske—Miller Huggins—Francis Wilson—Dan Frohman and Others.

THE LITTLE CHURCH is almost as famous for its funerals as for its thousands of weddings. We have a separate chapel for our dead that is, and yet is not, a part of the church. It is built in the form of an octagonal tower and has its own entrance to the pathway and to the lich-gate. But it also opens inside upon the nave itself, with tall grille-work gates. Thus the dead can lie at service with the living, as it were, or be secluded by the simple drawing together of the red plush curtains that close behind the grille.

St. Joseph's Mortuary Chapel this is called, in honor of that St. Joseph of Arimathea who gave his newly made mausoleum to our crucified Lord. There is a very interesting legend connected with its origin, which was told me by Mrs. Strombom, daughter of the second Dr. Houghton. She vouched for its veracity, though by its very nature, there is no record of it in our parochial files.

According to Mrs. Strombom, the first Dr. Houghton was sitting in his study one evening, with his night light burning, when a

stranger came to the door and asked the rector to come visit a woman who was dying. Dr. Houghton got out his holy sacraments and accompanied the messenger. He was led through the streets to a house that was well-known in its day as a house of prostitution. There he was taken upstairs to a bedroom in which lay a woman in the last throes of a long and ravaging illness. She was in great distress of spirit, as well, and he heard her confession. She was the "madam" of the house, she admitted, though she had come from a prominent family in Chicago. Her people had long ago disowned her and had no idea where she was now or what name she was using. But she had a little daughter whom she had placed with respectable people, and whose bills she had been paying. She was afraid of what might happen to this daughter after her death. Would Dr. Houghton promise to send the little girl to her people in Chicago?

Dr. Houghton assured the dying woman that he would carry out her commission. When all was over, he sent the little girl to her grandparents in Chicago, having first ascertained that she would be welcome there and well taken care of; then he brought the body of the mother to the church for burial. The mourners were inmates of her former establishment, who sat in the pews circumspectly and sobbed. They had honestly loved her.

To this day nobody knows the family name of this woman, for Dr. Houghton kept that secret to himself. But later, a sum of money arrived from Chicago, a gift for the church. Dr. Houghton set the money aside in a separate fund. Then, in time, the need for a funerary chapel arose. Some place was needed for strangers in New York who died in hotels, or alone in apartments, and whose remains were welcome nowhere in this metropolis. What more appropriate use for the fund than to employ it for those who, like this woman, had needed some refuge and haven in the first day of death?

So St. Joseph's was planned, but not actually erected until additional funds were raised for it, in the years of the second Dr. Houghton. Then it was built with the same gift for lovely detail and eye to solemn beauty which marked the second rector's designing of the Lady Chapel. The walls were lined with smooth mahogany, picked

out with gold, and the great Transfiguration window, which had originally gleamed behind the main altar, was installed as a reredos. When the sunlight filters in through this window, the whole crypt is filled with a living, dancing rainbow which always seems to me to be the very symbol of immortality and everlasting life.

To the left of the altar you will see an inscription that says this chapel is to the memory of Dr. George Hendric Houghton, our most beloved founder. And set around the walls, both inside and outside the chapel, you will see the many memorials and plaques, statues and inscriptions, which commemorate some of the dead who have worshiped at our shrines. One, for example, is to Walter William Griffin, a postman who delivered the mail to the church for thirty-five years. Another, a copy of the *Black Virgin of Nuremberg*, a famous medieval statue, is to William Woodville Rockhill, the ambassador, and was presented by Edith Rockhill after his death. One of the four archangels who guard the entrance is dedicated to Michael the verger; another to Edwyna Bridgman; a third to Mary Chamberlaine, friend of the Triumvirate; and the fourth to Robert Candler, whose home we had occupied at Martha's Vineyard. To the right of the door as you enter the chapel is a frame enclosing a fine piece of embroidery brought from Spain by Valerie Hadden. It is a masterpiece in silk, and represents the agony of Christ in the garden at Gethsemane.

On the other side of the door as you enter, and hardly noticed by anyone, is a small painting attributed to Titian, and presented to us by a woman parishioner. It depicts Mary Magdalen, dressed in nothing but her long Titian hair. I'm no great stickler for propriety, but I did have to search quite a while before I could find a suitable place to hang this in a church. Finally my eye lighted on this shadowy spot behind the chapel door, and I thought, "The very place!" Hanging there, the picture makes a perfect tribute to the unknown Magdalen in whose name the chapel was started, yet escapes the gaze of these who are easily shocked.

After Joe Jefferson brought his friend George Holland here to be buried in 1870, the Little Church became a favorite place for the-

atrical funerals. Early records show that Dion Boucicault, that most prolific of playwrights, was buried from here; as well as Lester Wallack, James Montague, Booth. The twentieth century has seen a lengthening list: Maurice Barrymore, James K. Hackett, Amelia Bingham, Tom Wise, Frank Craven, Channing Pollock, Otis Skinner, William Parke, Sam Scribner, Kyrle Bellew, Wallace Eddinger, Dustin Farnum, Walter Wilson, Grant Stewart, Charles A. Stevenson, Sidney Drew, John Drew, Vernon Castle, Bert Lytell, Robert C. Hilliard, Kate Claxton, Richard Mansfield, Grace Griswold, Alison Skipworth, Clara Morris, Minnie Maddern Fiske, Ida Mulle, Viola Allen, Arthur Lewis, Clare Eames, Francis Wilson, Walter Hampden, and many more.

After Holland's funeral, I suppose that of O. Henry would be most famous. That writer lived at the Caledonia, just three blocks south of here, and he mentioned the Little Church in a number of his stories. If you remember Soapy the tramp in "The Cop and the Anthem," you may remember that Soapy was regenerated by the sweet sounds of organ music floating out of church windows. Then he was arrested by an unsympathetic policeman for leaning on the church fence! Well, that was *our* organ Soapy heard, and our fence he was leaning on. We were the "old church, quaint and rambling and gabled."

O. Henry died on a June day in 1910, having been taken ill suddenly after a trip to North Carolina. His friends appealed to Dr. Houghton to permit the funeral to take place from the Little Church on Tuesday, at eleven in the morning, and the second rector, who greatly admired O. Henry, readily agreed. What he had forgotten, however, was that a June wedding had also been scheduled for that day and that hour!

It was a Miss Ida Louise Crossley who was to be married that morning to Frederick C. Thomas of East Orange, New Jersey. Mr. Thomas' brother, who was to act as best man, was the first to arrive. As he alighted from the cab, with a flower in his buttonhole, he was astounded to see that a hearse was drawn up in front of the close, that the yard was filled with mourners, and that a *miserere* was

sounding from inside on the organ. He dashed into the office—what did it mean? Only then was the mistake in schedules discovered, and Dr. Houghton was aghast. Somehow the young bride must be spared a funeral procession crossing her path.

The groom's brother rushed out to Fifth Avenue, where he intercepted the wedding cars before they turned the corner, and told everyone they were going on to the Holland House for an hour, for an impromptu reception. To the bride he explained that there had been a slight delay in schedules, and another marriage was now taking place. By the time the wedding party returned to the church and marched down the aisle, it was the "Wedding March" that was pealing forth from the organ, and all the lugubrious trappings had vanished. Richard Harding Davis, who was one of O. Henry's pallbearers, said he thought this near-collision was a perfect O. Henry ending, and one the great teller of tales would have fully appreciated. Naturally, it is very easy for such a mix-up to occur, and sometimes sextons and vergers have to work faster than quick-change artists to get the settings changed.

A sexton, of course, is a church undertaker, and every parish has one. Ours is Victor Shankey, whom I consider to be one of the best. He started here during the First World War as assistant to the old sexton, then was drafted for overseas duty. He tells me that before he sailed his good Irish mother, who was a devout Roman Catholic, came to see Dr. Houghton. "Please, Dr. Houghton," she asked, "before Victor goes away, will you kindly baptize him?"

"But Mrs. Shankey," he remonstrated, "Vic has already been baptized, and in your own Church!"

"I know it," she answered, "but though I hate to admit it, the priest was just a tiny drop under at the time. I don't suppose it makes any difference, but I'd like to know Victor is *really* baptized!"

And so Victor has been baptized in both the Roman and Episcopal churches, making him, as he says, a member of each. His mother, in fact, always claimed the Episcopal ceremony had "brought him good luck," for he returned from the wars without a

single scratch. Now Victor has his own funeral parlor on East Seventy-fourth Street, and another in Rockland County, where he makes his home. He is active in politics, and once was written up in *Time* for defeating Jim Farley's own candidate, who happened to be Farley's brother, in the county elections. He is still a handsome man, though he is now getting on, and his manner is so reassuring that he makes people forget they are dealing with the grim, gray reaper.

Most people, I find, have very little idea of what to do when somebody dies, and are therefore thrown into a terrible state of worry and confusion. All this is unnecessary if you follow the well-organized routines of almost any parish.

First of all, when someone near or dear to you is desperately ill, you notify your clergyman or priest of that fact. He will go to visit the patient, bringing whatever comfort he may and prepared to administer the last sacraments if called for. If death appears to be near, he will get in touch with Victor Shankey, or whatever undertaker the family may wish. This notice is important, for the undertaker should be prepared to claim the body rather shortly after death, and especially so if the patient is in a hospital. All these arrangements can be very harrowing to the family, for death always comes as a surprise no matter how long it has been expected, and one of the important functions of the clergyman and sexton is to ease the way at this time.

Most clergymen are called upon to bury only the people of their own parish, but we at the Little Church bury all kinds, from all over the city. Sometimes my phone rings and I am summoned to a hotel to make arrangements for someone I never saw in this life. Or again, when it rings, I will learn of the death of the great Walter Hampden or the beloved Bert Lytell or someone else who has been my friend for many years.

One day in 1934 I received a call from the son of Vernon Pell Baker, one of my vestrymen and long the dependable treasurer of this church. Mr. Baker had been losing his eyesight, and although his wife had learned Braille to help him, and all of us tried to con-

sole him, he could not reconcile himself to going blind. He had phoned his son and told him to come over at once, then had shot himself dead. I was reminded of this old tragedy just the other day when his widow, who now teaches Braille in California, came through New York on her way to England. She stopped in at the rectory for old times' sake, and we had a long talk. She was on her way to visit Madge Titheradge, the veteran English actress who was married to her brother.

Another of these sudden phone calls nearly landed me on a cold slab myself.

My summons came from a third-rate lodginghouse down in Greenwich Village. I was younger in those days, and a lot less wary. I rushed down to the hotel, and was met in the lobby by a man who was pretty unsteady on his feet. His wife was upstairs, he said, and was dying.

A doctor arrived just as we were starting upstairs, and I gave him precedence. That was fatal for him—for as we entered the bedroom, a woman who was stark staring mad with D.T.'s, sat up in bed, pulled out a gun, and fired point-blank. The doctor staggered back and fell on the floor, while I ducked behind a screen. She was still trying to focus on me and pull the trigger, when the proprietor came hurtling into the room and flung himself upon her. The husband had vanished, scared out of his wits; and by the time the police and ambulance arrived, it was too late to do anything for the doctor. He died on the way to the hospital, and I had him to bury instead of the woman. His family was out of town, I discovered, and so Victor Shankey and I took care of everything until they could get back. I had not known the doctor personally, but I had heard of his work. He was one of the finest and most conscientious young doctors in the city, and his death was a tragedy.

You see a lot of human nature in the raw at funerals. We had, at one time, an old lady who was always in and out of the church, hugging a large bag in which she carried her will and many thousands of dollars. She was one of those rich eccentrics like Hetty Green or the Wendell sisters, and lived all alone in a big house

downtown, which no one else had entered since her father died. She always reminded me of Henry James's character, the Heiress. She hadn't a friend in the world, and she had worn the same clothes for years: a truly pathetic figure, shabby, unwashed, and worth her weight in diamonds. But she felt at home here and often said she was remembering the Little Church in her will.

One day she died very suddenly in Wanamaker's department store. In her handbag they found a note reading: "In case of my death, please call the rector of the Little Church Around the Corner." So they sent for me, and Victor Shankey and I went to get her and to arrange for her funeral.

The day before she had seemed quite alone in the world. With the publication of the death notice, however, relatives converged from all points of the compass. Never in your life have you seen thick black crape such as appeared at her funeral. There were five or six women especially, cousins, who clung together like a group of black crows, and wept inconsolably. "*Now* what?" I thought. But all I know is that the old lady's will was never found—not officially—and the Little Church never received a cent of her money.

On the other hand, you sometimes encounter such candor, such freedom from hypocrisy, that it is quite disconcerting. Such was the case with the widow of an alcoholic who had suddenly died. I went to the house to conduct the services, and upon greeting the wife said sympathetically, "I was so terribly sorry to hear of your loss. It must be a great blow."

She looked me squarely in the eye. "You mean it must be a great relief, don't you?" she replied. "I put up with his drinking for years, but nothing could change him. I've done my duty, and now I can turn my responsibility over to God. I can't say I'm sorry."

There was nothing I could answer. If there was hardness and unforgivingness in her attitude, one had also to admit she had suffered inordinately, and that she had tried to do her best with an impossible situation. Perhaps if she had not tried so hard, or perhaps if she had left altogether, they might both have been better off. But

now death had broken the chains that bound weakness to strength, and strength perhaps to weakness, and I was not the one to judge.

Edwin Booth had been buried from the church in 1893. Now, in 1930, Blanche de Bar Booth was brought to lie in St. Joseph's Chapel. She was the oldest daughter of Junius Brutus Booth, II, and of Clementine de Bar, an actress from another old theatrical family. This was Booth's first marriage; he soon fell in love with another young actress, however, Harriet Mace from Boston, and left his family flat. Another daughter, Marion Booth, was born before Junius was divorced from his first wife, and while he and Harriet Mace were in California. Later they were married, and Marion's birth was legitimized.

Blanche de Bar Booth, who was eighty-six when she died, had been fervently "secesh" in her allegiance when young, and had adored her "Nunkie John," who was John Wilkes Booth. That was before the assassination. Afterward she suffered with the rest of her family, couldn't find work, and underwent a drastic change of opinion. At any rate, she resumed her career on the stage and for many years appeared with Mrs. John Drew's Philadelphia Stock Company and other theatrical troupes. When she was brought to St. Joseph's, sixty-five years had passed since that night in Baltimore when her maid had rushed in to her dressing room and told her "Nunkie John" had shot President Lincoln. What a stirring of old memories her passing evoked! And yet she was still not the last of the Booths. . . .

Two years later, an agent of the Actors' Fund, going his rounds to distribute relief, knocked on the door of a walk-up apartment over on First Avenue. Receiving no answer, he went to find a policeman, and they forced open the door. On the floor inside lay the body of Marie Booth Douglas, some seventy-odd years old, and the only surviving daughter of that Marion Booth who had been born of Junius Booth and Harriet Mace. She too had been an actress, and a trunkful of old theatrical costumes was found in the room. She had often gone downstairs to talk to the neighbors, telling them

of the great people she had known—but they had thought she was just a lonely old lady, wandering in her mind. We laid her to rest in the actors' plot up in Kensico Cemetery, where so many old performers await their last cue.

Another link with the past was severed when Joseph Holland, the youngest son of George Holland, died. He had made his final appearance with Katharine Cornell and Maurice Evans in *St. Joan*, and had turned in his usual fine performance in spite of his having lost his hearing. He had worked out an ingenious system of counting to keep track of his cues.

Amelia Bingham died, who had been a star when I was a child; and Grace Griswold, who appeared for years as the heroine of *Mrs. Wiggs of the Cabbage Patch.* Dustin Farnum passed on, ending a brilliant career both on stage and screen. His brother, William Farnum, was the chief mourner at the funeral, with Winifred Kingston, who had been Dustin's wife and leading lady. DeWolf Hopper delivered the eulogy, and when he spoke of the devotion between the two brothers, he broke down with emotion.

Mary Shaw was one of the great women I was called upon to bury. She had made her debut a half-century before at the old Boston Museum, and was almost as famous for her fight for women's rights as for her work on the stage. She was an exceptionally talented actress, however, with a flair for brittle dialogue, and she was magnificent in Shaw. No one could ever forget her as the defiant Mrs. Warren in *Mrs. Warren's Profession*, and in fact she had gone off triumphantly to jail for playing that role. Years later, it is said, when the Manhattan Theatre wanted to revive that play, Shaw refused to give his consent unless Mary Shaw played the role. She had been scheduled to open with Barrie's innocuous little comedy, *Alice-Sit-by-the-Fire*, but she canceled everything to reappear in the Shaw play. She had also originated the role of Mrs. Alving in *Ghosts*, and played Hedda Gabler and other stormy heroines from Ibsen. She was quite a woman all told, having plunged herself offstage into a strenuous career of feminist activities. She founded the Gamut Club, an organization of professional women, and a year after her

death, this club unveiled a memorial window to her memory. It is a clerestory window which depicts St. Ursula, patron saint of learning for young women, and is noteworthy for its very brilliant and luminous coloring. It was the first memorial window in this country to be dedicated to an actress.

Many famous people attended Mary Shaw's funeral, among them my good friend, Minnie Maddern Fiske, whom I regard as one of the great actresses of all time. She lived for years at the old Murray Hill Hotel, with her husband Harrison Grey Fiske, and surrounded by her souvenirs and photographs and collection of china dogs and bric-a-brac. She was getting very old, of course, but disdained the modern art of face-lifting; when she made up for the stage, she did what was necessary with adhesive tape. She had the truly grand manner of an earlier age, and so great was her magic that she could create her illusions with the simplest of props. But alas, how well I remember!—one hot summer night, when all the cast was perspiring freely, the tape slipped without Mrs. Fiske's feeling it. No one had the temerity to tell her anything was wrong, and so she went through the rest of the act presenting a very strange and lopsided appearance. Oh, but how the ears burned backstage when she got a furious look into her mirror! They wished then they had had a little more courage for the good of the play. One thing she could not forgive was to be "unprofessional."

Mrs. Fiske was a champion of animals and she idolized children. She had a small adopted son, Danville, who was a little older than Kathryna, and one time when she was playing in *The Rivals* with Rollo Peters, she called me up and said she wanted to give a little party backstage, after the matinee, for the children. She wanted Kathryna's first memory of a play to be one in which she starred, and so she had set aside a box for Kathryna and her friends. Kathryna went with little Leslie Howard and two other playmates, and they, together with Danville and three supervising nanas, all sat in a box that overlooked the stage. I doubt if they made very much of *The Rivals*, except that the costumes were pretty, but afterward they went backstage and were fed mounds of ice cream and cake.

They were not so much impressed, however, with Minnie Maddern Fiske as with the handsome Rollo Peters, who had captured so many other female hearts in addition to Jane Cowl's. They flung their arms about him, in an access of delight, until Mrs. Fiske complained, "Isn't it enough, Rollo, that you've captured all female hearts, without robbing the cradle? Get thee hence, Satan, you're spoiling the party!" And she drove him away.

Mrs. Fiske was always "retiring," and yet up to her last breath she was reading new scripts for plays. She sent for me one afternoon and prefaced her remarks by saying that she knew she could trust me to tell her the truth. She wanted to revive *Becky Sharp*. I don't know her age at that time, but she was surely as old as I am today. Becky Sharp was a young woman. Becky Sharp had also been her finest performance. I told her that she could not do what she had done many years before, and that she must not ruin what the world remembered as her greatest triumph. I reminded her of Duse and Bernhardt, and to my surprise, she took it in the right spirit and agreed with me readily. The play was not revived.

As I said, Mrs. Fiske came in 1929 to Mary Shaw's funeral. She was kneeling in prayer outside the chapel when she overheard someone say, "There is Mary Shaw's body. How very still she is!" For some particular reason, this remark struck a deep note of horror in Minnie Maddern Fiske. She said to me later, "When my time comes, I don't want anyone saying, 'There lies Mrs. Fiske. How very still she is!' I've never been still in my life! I won't stand for it! I know my husband will want to stage a big show for my funeral—he can't help it, that's simply his nature. So I want you to promise me that you will have the grille doors closed when I lie in the chapel. People will be able to kneel outside and say their prayers, but no one will be able to get close enough to look at my body."

I promised. But a short while later, she sent for me again. "I've thought about it some more, Dr. Ray," she said, "and I've decided I want the curtains pulled across the front of the chapel, so no one

can see me. Please make sure that nobody looks at me after I am dead."

Once more I promised. But as time aged her face more, and her days grew fewer, this horror of being stared at after death became an obsession. She ultimately instructed me: "I don't want to be brought to St. Joseph's at all! You can hold a memorial service for me later, if you like, but I want to be put in a coffin and cremated at once! The sooner the better!"

One day an old wardrobe woman who had worked with Mrs. Fiske came into my office. "Dr. Ray," she asked, "have you heard anything of Mrs. Fiske? I had a dream last night that she was dead, and I feel certain it is so." I told her Mrs. Fiske had just recently returned to the city from a trip, and so far as I knew, she was perfectly well. But about an hour later my telephone rang. It was Harrison Grey Fiske. His wife had just died, he informed me—would I come to the apartment and say a few prayers? I did so; then the body was taken out the back way, quietly, and to the crematorium. It was all done so swiftly that by the time her obituary appeared in the newspapers, there was nothing left of Mrs. Fiske but a handful of ashes. Naturally, we held a large memorial service for her later, attended by her fellow-players and members of the congregation. For to us, here at Transfiguration, Minnie Maddern Fiske was more than a celebrated actress. She had been one of our first theatrical brides, married here way back in the 1870s, not long after the Holland funeral. She had remained a faithful parishioner for more than sixty years.

Henry Miller was borne to St. Joseph's in 1930, his service bringing out so many mourners that mounted policemen had to clear a way for the hearse. He was one of the great actor-managers of the 1920s. The Henry Miller Theatre, named in his honor, had been the scene of many brilliant first nights. He had introduced many stars, among them Ruth Chatterton, who had simply enchanted everyone with her role in *Daddy Long Legs*. She slipped into the church before the service began to lay a small bouquet of

violets on his coffin. Among those who came to his funeral were Lionel Atwill, Robert Warwick, A. H. Woods, A. L. Erlanger, Blanche Bates, David Warfield, David Belasco, Grace George, Charles Coburn, Louis Mann, Katherine Alexander, Charles Dillingham, Holbrook Blinn, Arthur Hornblower, Jr., May Irwin, Sam Harris, Ina Claire, and many more well-known in the theater. But the most conspicuous figure there was "Pop" Hahn, an old blind peddler and a familiar figure on Broadway. For years old Pop had sold pencils outside the Henry Miller Theatre on West Forty-third Street, and whenever a new cop would come along and order him off, he would simply go upstairs to find Henry Miller. Miller never failed to drop everything and come down to straighten things out. "He was the finest man I ever knew," Pop kept saying, with the tears running down his leathery old cheeks. Most of Miller's family was abroad when he died, for he went suddenly from influenza; but he had a son, Gilbert, who was able to attend. And since then, Gilbert Miller has carried on in his father's tradition.

I suppose the nearest we ever came to a public riot was at the funeral of Miller Huggins, the mighty little manager of the New York Yankees. He was idolized by every baseball fan in the city, for under his leadership the Yankees had attained to six pennants and three world championships. He too had died suddenly, of flu, and few deaths ever so rocked the world of sports.

Huggins' body was brought to St. Joseph's the night before the funeral, and when we opened the doors next morning at seven, a long queue of fans had already formed. By noon, more than two thousand had filed past the bier, and every pew in the church was filled. It took a corps of ushers from the Yankee Stadium to handle the crowd outside as the hour for the service drew near, for Babe Ruth and Lou Gehrig and Tony Lazzeri, with all the other teammates, were marching to the church in a body. Printed reports of the funeral estimated that ten thousand New Yorkers tried to get into our churchyard; finally the police had to clear the streets entirely, as far as Madison Avenue.

Inside the church, one whole side of the nave was filled with the Yankees, headed by Colonel Jake Ruppert. The other side was taken up by trainers and managers from all over the country. Of all the celebrities buried from here, Miller Huggins gave us the "biggest gate" in terms of sheer numbers. Today his memory is honored with a bronze memorial on the wall of the nave, placed there by his fellow-workers and friends.

We have so many of these bronze tablets now, and so many memorial windows, that we may be said to resemble a small Westminster Abbey. The earliest of these, in point of time, is the window to James Montague, matinee idol of the 1870s. It shows him in the long, plain robes of a pilgrim, with scallop shell and staff, yet with the long drooping mustache of the Victorian dandy. Montague was founder and first Shepherd of the Lambs, and this portrait in stained glass is said to be an excellent likeness.

Along the south wall of the nave is a series of tablets usually referred to as the Roll of Honor, for among those memorialized here are Will Rogers, Minnie Maddern Fiske, Philip Ben Greet, Percy Moore, Otis Skinner, and Albert Brown and Raymond Peck, both Shepherds of the Lambs. Across from these another bronze tablet honors one of the most distinguished families in American letters, the Benéts: Frances Rose Benét, the mother, 1860–1940; James Walker Benét, the father, 1857–1928; the two sons, Stephen Vincent Benét, 1898–1943, and William Rose Benét, 1886–1950. The inscription says: *The Lights of the World in their several generations.* And in their several generations, they were members of this parish.

Arthur Lewis passed away in 1930, and was buried from the Little Church. He was an old veteran of the boards who had known simply everyone: he was a friend of such antipodal characters as Gladstone and Bizet. He had acted with Bernhardt, Maude Adams, and Mary Anderson, and had been married to the playwright, Clemence Dane. But his proudest boast was that he was the man who had invented grease paint. Many musicians and opera folk came to his funeral, including Emilio De Gogorza the baritone,

whose wife had been Emma Eames of the Met, the aunt of Clare Eames, the actress.

Then, almost incredibly, Clare Eames herself died. She was a most intelligent actress, outstanding for her portrayals of Ibsen and Shaw, and later of the roles created for her by her husband, Sidney Howard. She was very devoted to the welfare of her fellow-workers, and after her return from Hollywood in the 1920s, told Frank Gillmore, head of Actors' Equity, about the injustices suffered by actors in the studios. Gillmore said to her, "Clare, would you be willing to give three months of your time, without compensation, to conduct organization meetings out there?"

There was no hesitation. "She just looked me in the eye and said yes," Gillmore reported. This directness was one of Clare Eames's most outstanding traits. I saw her for the first time at Sergeant's dramatic school, when she was only a student. She did a scene from *The Second Mrs. Tanqueray*, and was already almost as good, I thought, as Mrs. Patrick Campbell. But when I tried to felicitate her upon her interpretation, she said, "Thank you, but all the credit should go to the director." This was not a stock answer; it was impossible to see Clare and doubt her sincerity.

Her death brought out a large representation among the workers in the theater, for she was universally respected and loved. Among the ushers and mourners were Brock Pemberton, Dudley Digges, Robert E. Sherwood, Alfred Lunt and Lynn Fontanne, Robert Edmund Jones, Margalo Gillmore, John Briggs, Bert Lytell, and many other associates. Clare had one daughter, and though she had been divorced from Sidney Howard for several months when she died, she named him executor of her estate, which she left in the form of a trust fund for her little girl. Clare Eames was not much more than thirty when she died, a tragic loss to the theater.

Another who was cut off early in a flourishing career was Wallace Eddinger, who caught cold in that bitter January of 1930, and was dead at forty-seven. Famous as a child star in *Little Lord Fauntleroy*, he had been on the stage for thirty-three years. He had a genius for fast, light comedy, and had been the star of *Seven Keys*

to Baldpate and many other hits under the direction of George M. Cohan. He was one of the early sports-car enthusiasts, and nearly killed Cohan one time, as well as himself and Cohan's daughter Georgette, by cracking up in broad daylight on the main street of Hartford. It is surprising how people survived everything else, in those days, only to die of the flu. My records are full of it. I don't think we fully appreciate how many lives are now saved every winter, thanks to penicillin.

Francis Wilson, too, died that spring of 1930, but well along in years. He had assumed the burden of the leadership of Actors' Equity in its formative period, and had spearheaded the battle all during the strike. He was a man of great courage, for of course this action made him many bitter enemies, who carried on their animosity even after the strike was concluded. But he stood high in the esteem of those whose rights he had fought for, and his passing brought out a very large attendance. Among those I saw in the crowd was Sam Shubert, and since it was unusual to see Shubert there, I made my way toward him. En route I bumped into Daniel Frohman, who hated Shubert like poison. It didn't help in the least when I stuck out my hand and said cordially, "I'm glad to see you, Mr. Shubert!"

"Uncle Dan" drew himself up and looked at me coldly. "Don't you know who I am, Dr. Ray?" he inquired. "I'm not Shubert, I'm Frohman!"

Of course I knew very well who he was; he was a member of Mollie's Thursday Night Club, and frequently came to meetings of the Guild to dance with the young folks. He was an excellent dancer, and laughed with pleasure when we called him Dancing Dan. I humbly apologized for calling him Shubert, but he was visibly shocked and had to make quite an effort, I'm afraid, to forgive me entirely.

Though Uncle Dan was Jewish by faith, he had long since asked me if he could be buried from the Little Church. I, in turn, had asked Bishop Manning and gained his consent. Happily, we had another ten years to go before Uncle Dan was in need of our serv-

ices. In the meantime, he went on acting as president of the Actors' Fund, which he served for thirty-seven years, and continued to raise huge sums for relief by the benefits he staged each year with "Mr. Frohman's million-dollar cast." When we gave him a big testimonial dinner at the Biltmore on the occasion of his sixtieth anniversary in the theater, and Channing Pollock struck the keynote with "Daniel Frohman, we love you!" everyone present burst into applause.

My turn came to speak, and Channing Pollock introduced me as "our friend who has the simplicity of a saint and the charm of a sinner." I thought it one of the most prettily worded introductions I have ever received, but of course Channing had very few equals in twirling a phrase. Helen Hayes was there, and Fannie Hurst, and many others whom Uncle Dan had helped along the way to success, including Fannie Ward, whom he had started on her career forty-five years before, and who sat there in her perennial youth, looking hardly a year older than when she began!

Uncle Dan was eighty-nine years old when he fell on the subway steps in Times Square and injured his hip. He was confined for a while to his sister Etta's house, and finally died on the day after Christmas in 1940. His body was brought, as he had asked, to St. Joseph's for burial. But what surprised me was when his sister said to me, just before the service: "You will take the service out at the cemetery too, won't you, Dr. Ray?"

I said, "Miss Frohman, I don't think that will be possible. A Protestant is not supposed to officiate in a Roman Catholic cemetery, and I don't think the rabbi would approve if I went into a Jewish cemetery. It is simply not done."

"But it was Dan's wish!" she argued. "He always used to say, 'Dr. Ray will bury me.' "

I went to the chaplain of the Jewish Actors' Guild, who was present at the time. "Here is an impossible situation," I explained. "How can I go out there? If he were being buried at Kensico, or one of the other public cemeteries, that would be different. But this is a private cemetery out in Long Island, and orthodox Jewish. I am sure to give offense."

He laughed at me good-naturedly. "Well, what can you do about it?" he asked. "And anyway I assure you that when you leave the cemetery afterward, you'll find that none of the graves have opened up in protest!"

This made me feel better, and so I went out to the cemetery in Long Island, to lay Dan Frohman in the ground. On the way out there I had plenty of time to think of Uncle Dan and his long, long lifetime of nearly ninety years. I had often talked to him about it. Like me, he had started on a newspaper, working as a copyboy on the old *New York Tribune*. He had soon developed the incredible ability to decipher Horace Greeley's illegible scrawls, which won him three dollars a week more than all the other boys were getting. He liked newspaper work, and wanted to stay with it; but his older brother Gus had got himself a stake in a blackface minstrel troupe that was going on the road, and needed someone he could trust to handle the money. Dan was sent out, and what with one thing and another, never did seem to find his way back to the *Tribune*.

He banged around the country back in the day when barnstorming really was tough. But in that way, he got to know every "opry house" and honky-tonk from here to the Coast. That was one of the things that later made him such a power in the theater, for he understood the "sticks," and became the first producer ever to send out road companies while the original show was still playing Broadway. He teamed up with Belasco, the latter handling casting and direction, while Uncle Dan took charge of the business end. They were a formidable combination. In later years, Frohman's office in the penthouse on top of the Lyceum Theatre was plastered with the pictures of stars he had handled: William Faversham, Margaret Anglin, Maude Adams, Henry Miller, James K. Hackett, Mary Anderson, Fanny Davenport, William Gillette, Richard Mansfield, Henrietta Crosman, and many, many others. All the way back to a young unknown named E. H. Sothern.

Belasco was known as the "genius" of the theater, and he was; but it was Dan Frohman who, as early as 1880, had got fed up with the interminable demand for *Uncle Tom's Cabin* and *The Old*

Homestead, and gone to Europe to search for new material. He had brought back Pinero and Sardou and other writers then regarded as extremely modern. His impact on the theater, in his almost ninety years of life, was simply inestimable.

He had been married only once—nearly forty years before—to a talented young actress named Margaret Illington. For the first six years, the match was regarded as an outstanding success. Then Miss Illington announced that she was retiring because she hated the stage, and all she wanted to do was "sit and darn socks." Frohman did not oppose her, but, on the other hand, his whole life was in the Broadway theater, and they drifted apart. She sued him for desertion finally, from far-off California; then, within a year, returned to the stage. Eventually she married Major Edward Bowes. Frohman never remarried.

On the way to the cemetery, I had time to think of all these things. I remembered the tragedy of his other brother, Charles Frohman, who had been lost when the *Lusitania* went down. I also remembered something else—how Dan Frohman had been shown the door at a country club in Long Island because he was Jewish. He had been invited there to dinner by some friends who were members and who proposed his name as member. The affront came when the management called the hostess away from the table and informed her that Frohman was not wanted in the place because he was a Jew! The hostess and her husband at once withdrew their whole party, and the next day resigned from the club with a letter to the management, which stated: "We are very happy that Christ was not a member of our party last night, for of course by your policy, he would have had to leave too." This was in 1934, when Hitler was the white hope of Germany, and his success encouraged some weird happenings over here.

Frohman was hurt by this affront, naturally, but not at all embittered. I remember, however, that when a bas-relief of him was made in 1937 by Florence Malcolm Darnault, and presented to the Guild, he alluded to it by inference. He was asked to say a few words to the group which included Fannie Hurst and Channing

Pollock and many members of the Guild, and his subject was a plea for greater understanding and tolerance. "I am a member of all religions," he said simply. "I believe in all religions that bring good to people."

And now here was I, a Gentile, coming with Uncle Dan into a Jewish orthodox cemetery, and no one objected! I was grateful to my Hebrew instructor back at the Seminary, who had sent me to synagogues all over town, for now I was able to put together a suitable service by using an old Judaic prayer, a part of the Psalms, and a few words of my own. For all I know, I may be the only non-Jewish clergyman who ever conducted such a service, under such circumstances. But the chaplain had been right—when I left the cemetery, not a single grave opened up.

CHAPTER XX

The Depression—I Appeal for Help—We Establish a Breadline for the Hungry—Heywood Broun Joins Us—Edna Ferber Helps Find Jobs—The Little Church in Debt—We Seek a Solution—The Family of the Little Church Around the Corner.

With 1930 came the Great Depression. First there was the Wall Street crash in the fall of '29, followed, as winter wore on, by increasing unemployment and public distress. People were hungry. As always in hard times, the first to be affected were those who lived on the borderline of security anyway—the itinerant workers, the unskilled laborers, the men without families. In the bitter cold of that first winter, one could see them huddled in doorways, sleeping in the corners of subway platforms covered over with newspapers, or even seeking some more sheltered position in the public parks. The "Municipal Hotel," otherwise known as the flophouse, was equipped to give overnight accommodations to about one thousand. One cold night more than fifteen hundred stormed its doors to get out of the weather, and when all beds were filled, four hundred lay packed like sardines all over the floors, the corridors, the basement, the office. Even a city barge, anchored on the river, was made to serve as a drafty hotel.

As conditions kept growing worse, we at the Little Church kept

asking one another, "Why don't they *do* something about it? Why doesn't somebody *act*?" So far there had been no state or federal aid, no help from the city, and little sign of anything but talk. Finally our course of action became clear. Twice before in its history, the Little Church had established breadlines—once in 1864, after the hardships of war, and again in 1907, during that panic I had observed while working for the *Eagle*. It was in the tradition of the Little Church to give bread when it was needed, and surely never had it been needed so badly as now!

But what could we do for money? We too had been hit by the market collapse, for the legacies and investments held for us by the bankers had fallen off in value like everyone else's. Our treasury was at an all-time low, but being a church we still enjoyed credit. I announced that we would hand out food tickets to the first hundred men who appeared every day, and was able to make arrangements for the men to be fed at Beefsteak John's on Third Avenue. This was one of the heartier eating places, where you could get a twenty-cent meal consisting usually of beef stew, potatoes, bread, and coffee, but occasionally with an alternate choice of scrambled eggs. Before a week was up, however, our line had tripled and quadrupled in length, and we were forced to appeal for funds to the public.

My letter to my fellow-citizens, which was prominently displayed by the *Herald-Tribune*, stated in part:

> For the third time in our history we have found it necessary to establish what, for a better name, we call a breadline, in an attempt to help keep life in some of the hundreds of men who are out of employment and who are practically starving.
>
> We have an arrangement by which, for the surprisingly low price of twenty cents, we can get a substantial meal. One dollar will feed five, ten dollars, fifty men.
>
> We give the majority of the tickets between 9 and 10 o'clock each morning. We have been giving from 400 to 500 meals a day. I do not know how long it will be necessary to keep up this work. Of course, it is a mere drop in the bucket.
>
> We must have money to continue this work. Any contribu-

tions toward this effort of ours to help will be greatly appreciated.

RANDOLPH RAY, RECTOR,
LITTLE CHURCH AROUND THE CORNER.

Contributions began to come in almost immediately, both from the city and from other parts of the country, where the story was carried by the wire services. But maintaining a breadline is sowing dragons' teeth with a vengeance—ten men spring up where only one stood before. At first the line was but a single file winding into our courtyard, and I could see each man in the rectory office and gather some idea of what work he was equipped for. But soon the single line stretched to the corner. Then around the block, to meet itself coming back. And then the police were there suddenly, to make the men double up, two abreast, and move in closer. Then three abreast. Four abreast. And finally, *five* abreast, a long phalanx of hunger that inched its way forward with but one common thought —to get that bit of white cardboard which meant a meal for the day. Yes, one meal a day!

I detest breadlines. They are cruel and degrading. They pitilessly advertise the plight of those who are newly impoverished, the victims of economic collapse, and they are exploited by the professional racketeer and sponger. We soon had to put into effect a double-check system, to guard against those who would, if they could, get in line again and sell the extra ticket for ten or fifteen cents. Such a sum in those days was worth standing in line for another three hours! But by and large our customers were too apathetic to need any watching—farm laborers come to the city to seek winter work, construction workers thrown out of jobs by the complete cessation of building in the city, chauffeurs, workers in the luxury trades, all too hungry and too stunned by their condition to think up any angles. Many were still very neat in their appearance, trying to keep up a front in their last good clothes. Others were frankly reduced to tatters. But all of them were hungry.

I soon found out that looking at a breadline is an acid test of any man's nature. Just as certainly as a Geiger counter, it can tell you

if there is anything worth while in the human breast. I still remember one columnist who came down to the breadline, saw that great hungry serpent that wound around the block, and went back to his office to write:

> I went down the line slowly, then back, looking them over, and just to assure Dr. Ray that I wasn't looking for a handout myself, slipped him a little gift; not that I believe in his work, or think it is doing much good, but because he thinks it is. Maybe it is. I would think that perhaps one man out of every six in that line was a legitimate case. Five out of six, to judge from their looks, are professional bums, flophouse loafers, dopes, and fellows who wouldn't recognize work if they saw it.

Such observations, printed in the conservative *Sun*, were no doubt of great consolation to those who claimed the whole unemployment situation was greatly exaggerated, and that Mr. Hoover's prosperity was just around the corner. But other people came to look, whose Geiger counters began to tick away furiously at the sight of so much misery all in one spot, and on an American street. One of these was Heywood Broun, that natural humanitarian. He became our first, and our most effective, champion. Day after day he slugged away in his column in the *World*, never letting anyone forget for a moment that breadlines were to be seen every day in New York. His column appeared in many other papers out of town, and so we got quite a coverage.

Nor did this exceptional man stop at writing a column. Broun was a big, rumpled, easygoing man whom city editors had long ago despaired of herding into an office on time; a man who proclaimed himself publicly the "President of the Lie-Abed-until-Noon Club." Yet each morning now, by 8:30 or 9, when we began to hand out tickets, he was there with his overcoat collar turned up around his ears. He talked to the men, he gave each a cigarette, he listened to their stories. While most of the breadliners had never got beyond grade school, a few had college degrees. Here and there was a man who still lived with his family, but who came to the breadline so that his portion of food could be divided at home. Sometimes there

were men who had walked the streets for nights before reconciling themselves to accepting a bed in a flophouse. One man, a Dane, had such a horror of picking up lice that he tramped the streets for twelve nights before he gave in! You see, poverty has many other horrors besides that of hunger.

Unlike the columnist from the *Sun*, Broun was convinced that many of these men would work gladly if given an opportunity. He broached the idea of opening up an employment office right here on Twenty-ninth Street. At a nominal rental we took over an old storefront and appealed to everyone who had any kind of work, full-time or odd jobs, to let us know. We all expected that the situation would ease up with warm weather, so our slogan was, "Give a Job till June." We announced that we hoped by that time to have secured a thousand jobs.

As Broun remarked in his column: "Often nothing stands between a man and a job but a decent suit." If we were to take men out of the breadline and send them out to meet a possible employer, we had to make them presentable. If clothes were in hock, we had to get them out. If clothes were nonexistent, we had to provide. We solicited gifts of warm clothing, especially overcoats, and we also made a deal with a clothier for ten-dollar suits.

But where could a man change his clothes, when all this was provided? Where could he shave, and get a bath, and fix himself up? Broun was not the only Good Samaritan who rallied to our banner. Marjorie Post Hutton—she who later married Joseph E. Davies—was known as the "Lady Bountiful of Hell's Kitchen." She was already supplying seven hundred free meals a day in the Bowery. She, together with Mrs. William Randolph Hearst and Mrs. Cornelius Vanderbilt, now took over an empty brownstone house near the church and furnished it, so that the men who wanted to could go in and use its facilities and get themselves clean.

Another faithful helper in those days was dear old Harry Davenport, for years a beloved character actor in the movies, and a member of the famous Davenport clan. He was on deck first thing in the morning, helping to hand out tickets and speaking a word of cheer

to the men. Those who had stood in line from as early as six-thirty were apt to be a bit grouchy along about nine. But the late-comers often joked and were reasonably cheerful. Of course they also ran the risk of not getting a meal, for we frequently ran short of tickets, as did all breadlines. The Salvation Army ran a breadline during this period, and so did Mr. Zero, and the Church of the Ascension, and several others. We simply handed out our tickets for as long as our money lasted: those at the end of the line had to be turned away. And still no sign of government aid!

Finding jobs for men and buying them suits, even ten-dollar suits, began to cost much more than we received. Broun conceived the idea, with some cheering from me, of presenting a huge benefit at the Imperial Theatre and calling it the *Give a Job till June* night. The theatrical brokers agreed to sell tickets without charging commission, and everyone else chipped in with services. We charged one dollar for the balcony and up to five dollars for the orchestra, and as high as you wanted to go for the boxes. In spite of hard times, we practically sold out the house. Texas Guinan, queen of the night clubs, was mistress of ceremonies. Broun was MC, relieved by his colleagues Winchell and Hellinger. Among the stars who appeared onstage were Rudy Vallee, Babe Ruth, Benny Leonard and Johnny Dundee, Helen Morgan, Mae West, Donald Ogden Stewart, Red Nichols, Lili Damita, Ben Bernie, Harry Richman, Ruth Etting, DeWolf Hopper, Eva LeGallienne, and the Albertina Rasch girls. The show started at midnight, after all the stars had finished their evening performances, and went on until dawn. We had hoped to raise six thousand dollars, clear of expenses. Actually we got nearer to eight thousand. One tenth of this went to the Actors' Fund, for the actors who were out of work, and nine hundred dollars to the Little Church for support of the breadline. Again, the acting profession had come to our aid. The remainder of the money, as Broun proudly reported, was spread around where it might do the most good. It helped to find clothes for eighty-nine people, bought shoes for seventy-four, sent seventeen people to doctors and dentists, and bought off a number of landlords. Evictions were common in those

days, and when we could we struck a compromise with landlords, keeping whole families from being thrown in the street.

Broun, the "laziest man in town," worked twenty hours a day. So did most of the rest of us. Radio station WMCA offered us free time, and Broun began to broadcast every noon at 12:15, asking for jobs and describing the qualifications of the men we had to offer. "Mr. Y," for example, had been a brakeman. He could manage anything on wheels. "Mr. X" was a carpenter. "Mr. Z" had been a jeweler. Did anyone have a job for a man who was partially blind? And so it went—a sort of daily auction block, where the product was offered from the most humane of motives. We had set an objective of placing two men a day. We did a bit better, though not without cheating. Broun's apartment shone like a Sapolio Town ad, due to the numbers of men he had sent up there to "slick up the place a little, and here is two dollars." All our church silver, to Michael's disgust, had been polished and repolished till he said the finish was apt to wear off. But I do not mean to say we didn't have our disillusionments, for not all the men were equally serious about wanting to work. There was one good-natured fellow I rather took a liking to, for he came from Mississippi. I brought him into the sacristy one day and found a clean suit of clothes for him, as well as a hat, shirt, underwear, shoes—a complete outfit. He gave me a wonderful smile and went on his way rejoicing. Two days later he was back in the breadline, just as shabby as before. I asked him what on earth had happened. Cheerfully he told me he had got in a game of craps and lost the whole thing. I began to swell up like an ol' puff adder being poked with a stick, then I subsided. What was the use? The *undeserving* poor, as Bernard Shaw says, need so much more than the rest of us! And so I told him he could keep coming every day to get his free meal, but no more special favors. He smiled back in a perfectly friendly manner, no hard feelings. For him, I suppose, this was par for the course.

Religious affiliation had nothing to do, naturally, with our handing out of tickets. We gave to all comers. But one day, moved by nothing more sinister than curiosity, I asked one man if he had ever

belonged to a church, and if so to what denomination. He told me he was Baptist. The man behind him in line, overhearing this exchange, apparently thought Baptist was the requisite password. He stepped up and said, "Baptist, Father," touching his cap reverently as he reached for his ticket. The next man the same. To my astonishment, we had one hundred Baptists in line, without a single dissenter, before I called a halt to it! It really wasn't fair. It was perfectly obvious they would have been Whirling Dervishes, if necessary, to get that free meal. I had no business asking.

Edna Ferber came down to the breadline on a number of occasions, and was so moved by "this drab, strong-smelling gray line," as she described it, that she took over Broun's column for a couple of days. Alexander Woollcott wrote some powerful pieces pleading our cause, and Ed Wynn, bless him, took up a collection at *Manhattan Mary*. That gave us four hundred dollars—two thousand more meals.

Many actors and actresses took turns getting up early in the morning and coming down to the breadline to help hand out tickets. I remember some of them—Joan Blondell, Jane Cowl, Edith Barrett, Glenn Hunter, Hope Williams, Libby Holman, Francine Larrimore, Raymond Massey, James T. Powers, Madge Evans, Cissie Loftus, Basil Rathbone, the two Astaires, and Peggy Wood. Their appearance gave a definite lift to the morning morale. It implied to the "liners" that they were not forgotten, and it gave them something to look forward to beyond seeing my face again and the face of my assistant.

The advantage of our breadline over most of the others in the city was that it was not located conveniently down in the Bowery, or off on some side street where no one could see it. It was right off Fifth Avenue, the richest street in the world, and could not be ignored. In one of his columns Broun had remarked, "If two thousand victims of small-pox stood outside the Little Church Around the Corner every morning, the community would be frightened into taking immediate action." The community *was* moved, finally, to take immediate action—or as immediate as possible. City engineers

in the planning department began to work until midnight, devising construction projects large enough to employ some of these thousands of men. Other councils went into action to provide for relief. We announced that we would close our breadline as soon as public help was available, and that was what we did, for we had known right along that such measures as we might take were completely inadequate. The job was a vast one, and had to be handled by the people themselves, through their elected government.

Curiously enough, while we had had no trouble at all with the men in the breadline until this moment, they were roused to indignation when we tried to close up. Things had always been so quiet that one patrolman on duty was sufficient—and he spent most of his time chatting with an old acquaintance he found in the line, and with whom he once had worked in a bakery. Now the angry shouting and the pushing and shoving became so alarming that reinforcements had to come on the double. I suppose the men did not really believe they would be taken care of elsewhere. At any rate, on our very last day we nearly had a riot.

As I have mentioned, I do not like breadlines, do not even approve of them; but desperate times require desperate measures. Before June arrived, in 1930, bringing with it warmer weather and the first official measures for relief, we had received $21,562.44 in contributions from various sources, and had spent it all, and more, in doing what we could to help those in distress. I am glad that we did it, but I am even happier to believe that such conditions can never recur. Nowadays, I am confident, we have a better understanding of business cycles and can prevent such disasters, or can, at any rate, institute relief before the situation gets so far out of hand.

Broun again summed up the thing much better than I can. "I am not goofy enough to think," he said in his column, "that we have done more than put a dent in the thing, but we have brought the unemployment crisis out into the open."

We did that, and we found a few jobs. Though it had been our goal to place a thousand men in "jobs until June," actually we had placed half again that number. We had sent one man up to Putnam

County to run a motorboat on a lake, another out to Long Island to work at a kennel. We had placed dishwashers, porters, elevator operators by the score, not to mention porters and short-order cooks. Not many of these openings were jobs with a future, but they put a roof over the head and let a man eat. Not much to boast of, but a crowning achievement in 1930.

One final word I'd like to say about Broun . . . He made a good many enemies, as any man is bound to do who disturbs the public peace of mind. The last column he ever wrote about the breadline had this to say, among other observations:

> The churches of America have been disgracefully inept and sluggish in the matter of the unemployment crisis. To be sure, there are exceptions. Everybody knows of the valiant work done by Dr. Ray of the Little Church Around the Corner. And there were others equally energetic. But for the most part American churches acted as if the misery and agony of millions were not at all within the scope of their concern.
>
> The Minsky brothers, who own burlesque theaters, provided ten jobs in the campaign which this column ran, and that was a contribution highly in excess of the support which we received from most of the churches of the neighborhood.

Words like these are not very likely to win a lot of friends. A highly critical writer on another paper referred to Broun's long campaign in behalf of our breadline as "Broun's crying jag." Idealists always leave themselves open to superficial wisecracks, and the truth happened to be that Broun wept very easily, and often in public. I have sat near him at the theater and seen the tears flow unstanched down the big man's cheeks. That huge body! Nature had made an oversized man of him, and the heart inside was oversized too, to go with the rest. Never have I known anyone who was more aware of *belonging* to humanity, of accepting without quibble the creed that we are all our brothers' keepers. Like Franklin Roosevelt, he came from upstate Dutch stock, and his mother, who sometimes came to our church, always reminded me forcibly of Sara Delano Roosevelt. He was an Episcopalian by birth, baptized and

confirmed; but around the time of his second marriage in 1935 he joined the Roman Catholic Church and became one of the first "famous converts" of Monsignor Sheen. He died just before Christmas in 1939, his age only fifty-one, and was buried from St. Patrick's. I met his brother this last winter in Florida, and we sat and reminisced. He, like myself, still mourned the memory of this big, unruly, lovable man, and he told me that after the funeral he and his mother considered whether or not they should hold their usual Christmas party that year, or call the thing off. Old Mrs. Broun finally concluded that "Christmas is bigger than Heywood or anyone else," and so the family got together as usual. Heywood got many a priceless column out of his mother's "proud traditions," and I feel that this might have provided him one of his best.

I have said that the parish was rather heavily in debt when I first took over. This was mainly because Transfiguration was once again being affected by shifting conditions in the city. The first Dr. Houghton had built his edifice in the midst of pastures and fields, and then within a few years had been surrounded by great houses and brownstone mansions. Now the wave of population was receding again. Those who could afford to had moved to Connecticut, to Westchester, or at least to some penthouse apartment. The wreckers were busy along Fifth Avenue. In the span of a decade, the Vanderbilt mansion, the Wendell house, the Rhinelander estate and the Waldorf-Astoria, were razed. The skyscrapers were marching down upon us in a solid brigade—and what chance did a little rambling brick church, in the path of their progress, have of surviving?

By the year 1930, the start of the Depression, we were really in financial hot water. Our stock-market holdings, some of them left to us in legacies and some of them investments made by our bankers, had taken a tremendous loss in the crash, and we had to find additional income from somewhere. Our situation was truly so desperate that the Vestry discussed the advisability of selling the site on which we had been for so long, and moving out to less expensive property. But the thought was too horrible to be entertained

long. It was then that the Family of the Little Church, which had been forming in my mind since I first took over, became a definite project.

On Low Sunday, 1930, seven years to the day from my first appearance in that pulpit, I arose and told the congregation that henceforth the Little Church Around the Corner was to be a national shrine, in the keeping of the people. Money was needed, I admitted, but money alone would not save the church from the demolition that was going on all over the city. "There is one thing, however," I pointed out, "that is greater than big business, more powerful than millions of dollars. It is human sentiment. This church is hallowed by it. Today I am announcing the organization of this sentiment for the purpose of saving the church as a national shrine for generations to come, as a medium of God's love to men. This organization is to be called The Family of the Little Church Around the Corner."

That was the idea—to band together all our friends and well-wishers into one great family, to harness the sentiment of those who loved the church into such a powerful force of protection that no one would ever dare to lay a hand on our stones. We drew up a brochure entitled *The Family of the Little Church Around the Corner* and illustrated it with views of the Bride's Altar, the Jefferson Window, St. Joseph's Chapel, the Lich-Gate, and all the scenes that were so loved and so familiar. We mailed this brochure to all whose names were on our records and in our visitors' book, explaining that we hoped to raise a million dollars, from a million persons if necessary, to keep the church where it was. The Chase National Bank would be the keeper of this fund, and all it would cost anyone to belong to the Family was a dollar a year. For those who wished to give more, there would be associate memberships for ten dollars a year, and life memberships, even, for one hundred dollars. But all we were actually seeking was that dollar a year—from everyone who knew us.

The response was overwhelming, not only from those who heard my appeal, but from the thousands and thousands who received our

brochure. The filled-out membership cards came back, together with the money—and of course, in many cases, much more than we had asked for. The whole nation by now was hit by depression, and hard times were all about us, yet almost everyone, it seemed, could spare a dollar for the church. And with the cards and the money came wonderful, heart-warming letters assuring us of support and allegiance, and asking to be kept informed on how we made out.

For our part, we entered into a voluminous correspondence that grew and grew with the years, until now at long last we have a full-time secretary who does nothing but attend to "Family correspondence."

By far the largest part of our Family are those who were married here, and to these we send a yearly anniversary card, illustrated with a scene from the church and a message from me. We are rather famous, I may mention, for the accuracy of our wedding records, and civil authorities always accept our word without question.

So do husbands, many of whom seem to have a terrible time remembering the day and date of their marriage. A man rushed in here the other day and said to Miss Smith, who has charge of our books, "See here, my wife's in England, and I want to send her a cable. I know we have an anniversary coming up soon, but I don't know when. If I send the cable too soon, I'll give myself away, and if I send it too late, I'll get in still deeper. You've got to help me out." This sort of thing happens again and again, ladies—and never, until now, have we betrayed the secret of how unerringly he remembers to produce that anniversary bouquet!

Women, of course, always know when they were married—and often they want to be married again. I mean, to the same man. Rarely a day passes that some couple does not return for a tenth, or twenty-fifth anniversary, and very frequently they go through a ceremony and renew their vows. Fannie Hurst and her husband, who were married here at the church, lived in separate apartments so they would not interfere with each other's work, but they came back and renewed their vows each year. They were the only ones

I have ever known who renewed their vows on each anniversary, but I have known many others who renewed their marriage vows at longer intervals, sometimes two or three times. It is a very pretty custom, and it is a much more moving sight to see two people reaffirming their love, after the give-and-take of family life, than to see the newlyweds who are so deeply in love they hardly know what they are saying. There is something about gray-haired people promising again to "love and to cherish, till death do us part" that brings tears to the eyes.

In 1923, I married a young couple who were no more than eighteen or nineteen. A year or so later, I baptized their small daughter. When she grew up, I married her in front of her parents, and, a year or so later, baptized her small daughter. Now, just this winter, they all brought this grandchild to be married by me, a lovely young girl who looked almost exactly like the bride I had married in 1923. I looked at the three women, the three generations, married by me, and could not help asking, "What does this make me, a grandfather, or great-grandfather?"

But some of our Little Church Family go back before my time, to the days of the Houghtons. A couple came here recently who had been married by the second Dr. Houghton, fifty years ago. I dropped everything that day and devoted myself to showing them around. Many things had changed from the way they remembered the church, and we had a most enjoyable time comparing notes. At the end of our tour, they knelt on the very spot where they had exchanged vows a half-century before, and I gave them the blessing of the church. There is something so eternally young about people who are happily married! I have noticed this fact again and again, and I'm quite sure if Ponce de Leon had been happily married, he would never have wasted his time looking for the fountain of youth.

We get a lot of young people from out of town who come to be married, and who seem to have no church affiliations back home. In such cases, we drop a note to the Episcopal rector in their town, and he usually calls on them after they have set up housekeeping,

and invites them to church. In this way, the Little Church is one of the greatest feeders of the Episcopal faith in America, for many of our newlyweds become members when they go back home.

And sometimes these people, after years away from New York, will postpone important ceremonies until the time comes when they can make a "sentimental journey" back here to us. Such were the husband and wife from Australia, good loyal Anglicans, who went to church every Sunday back home, but waited until they could return to New York to get their children baptized! The oldest was seven by the time they arrived, but I baptized all three together at the big stone font, and then we all trooped around exploring the church where "Mommy and Poppy had been married." Those kids had heard so much about the church they knew just what to ask for.

The saddest part of our correspondence with our wide-flung Little Family is answering the letters of personal bereavement. Often years of silence, then one of them dies, and the other one, alone and bewildered, sits down to write to me. I was the person who married them—surely, out of all the people in the world, I must be the one to care and understand! And I do understand. Who can understand better what that sudden loss means? I sit down and write an answer, knowing that no words will heal the emptiness in the heart—only time can do that—but I try to give what solace I can. Sometimes I wonder if I succeed in giving any comfort at all. But one day a woman came into my office and said, "Dr. Ray, you wrote me such an understanding letter when my husband died, that I read it over and over. Today would be our twenty-seventh anniversary if he were still alive, and so I felt I wanted to spend the day here. I also want to be a lifelong member of the Little Church Family," and she handed me a check for one hundred dollars. We walked about the church together, and she stayed on for vespers, and I was grateful to her for reassuring me that my sometimes hard-to-write letters are well worth the effort.

Occasionally some of these widows or widowers will return after an interval, introduce me to some new partner in love, and ask me to marry them again. I am usually most happy to. Samuel Johnson

said that a man's wanting to marry again can be interpreted as a compliment to his first wife, and often it is so. At least to a stranger, the second wife frequently bears a strong resemblance to the first. But then, of course, you also get the people who never marry again, as though they could love only once in this life.

In addition to the brides and grooms, the Little Church Family contains what we call the Easter Group, because they receive their cards at Easter time instead of on anniversaries. This group is made up largely of visitors and tourists, and those who love the Little Church. They live in Italy, Canada, Burma, Brazil, and even behind the Iron Curtain! One year I received a letter from two of our members living in Moscow. They had been receiving our cards each Easter, they told us, and had appreciated this touch with the outside world. We have had the same response from behind the Bamboo Curtain, from members living within Red China.

Just now the printer has walked into my office with three thousand new membership cards, all freshly made up. They will not last long. Inevitably we lose some of our old members over the years, but new ones replace them. So far as I know, this is the only "alumni society" of a church in existence, and it has nobly fulfilled the purpose for which it was founded. There is no longer any question of the Little Church's being moved, or torn down to make room for the giants of progress. We are protected by a world-wide Family, tens of thousands strong—*and* we are respected as a national shrine.

People who were married here often send us checks and ask us to decorate the Bride's Altar with flowers on their anniversary day. We happily oblige. Or they send some object of beauty to add to the church's treasures. In this way we received our beautiful carving of Joseph of Arimathea, done in old ivory, as well as the alabaster figurines of Gabriel and St. Christopher, all of which are displayed in St. Joseph's Chapel. The church has many treasures of this sort which are true museum pieces. Financial gifts, of course, go to the permanent endowment of the church.

After service every Sunday, we have a guided tour. Dozens of people then gather in the chantry and Mrs. Suzette Stuart, who pre-

pared our *Illustrated Guide Book*, leads the way around. She knows the history of every pew, every painting, every memorial window, and of all the theatrical relics up in the Actors' Guild Hall. Lots of people become members of our Family after making this tour.

Thanks to the Little Family, Transfiguration is no longer a vanishing parish. It may, in fact, be the largest on earth!

CHAPTER XXI

Visiting Backstage—A Gallery of Players—DeWolf Hopper—Father Duffy—Otto Kahn Again—Bernard Baruch—Henry Luce's Uncle—Otis Skinner and Family.

IN SPITE of all these other activities, Mollie and I rarely missed a first night at the theater. It was our custom to visit backstage after the curtain, both for the pleasure it gave us, and for the opportunities it afforded to do a little more missionary work for the Guild. Thus, to our circle of acquaintances were gradually added such delightful people as Josephine Hull (Mrs. Shelley Hull, who was among the first to join the Guild); Percy Haswell (sister-in-law of that Mrs. Haswell who met me at the station in Bryan); Leona Hogarth of *The Great God Brown*; Margaret Wycherly of *Tobacco Road*; Emily Stevens (niece of Minnie Maddern Fiske); Beryl Mercer, Ina Claire, Madge Titheradge; Miriam Hopkins of *Jezebel*; Blanche Bates and Frances Starr; Viola Allen (who always received a rousing ovation whenever she appeared at Guild benefits); Louise Closser Hale and Minnie Dupree, both fine character actresses; Estelle Winwood (who appeared in blackface with Ethel Barrymore in *Scarlet Sister Mary*); Laura Hope Crews and Roland Young of *Her Master's Voice*; Eddie Dowling of *Thumbs Up*; Alfred Lunt and Lynn Fontanne (whom I first met when they were supporting

Laurette Taylor in *Sweet Nell of Old Drury*); Francis Wilson, master of light comedy; Mary Boland of *The Vinegar Tree*; Violet Kemble Cooper and Tom Powers of *The Apple Cart*; Glenn Hunter and June Walker of *Waterloo Bridge*; Fred and Dorothy Stone of *Ripples*; Elsie Ferguson of *Scarlet Pages*; Katharine Cornell of *The Barretts of Wimpole Street*; Marjorie Rambeau, who eventually went to Hollywood, and innumerable others.

British stars, as soon as they landed, were brought along to the rectory for English high tea. Thus we got to know Cyril Maude and his daughter Marjorie, and Noel Coward, who came over with his leading lady, Gertrude Lawrence, to raise a few eyebrows with *Private Lives*. Also Lillian Braithwaite, whose father had been an Anglican clergyman ("I never had any religion myself, to tell you the truth, though they had me confirmed"); and Cicely Courtneidge and her husband, Jack Hulbert, who had come over with Bea Lillie to capture the town. The Hulberts were devoted church people and never missed a service.

We felt it our duty to go to all plays, whether they seemed likely to last for two nights or two years. I soon discovered a strange thing about actors, church people or not: they much preferred your appearing in clerical clothes. It was something of a feather in their cap, it seems, to be visited by the clergy, and it was a great disappointment if you turned up in mufti. Once I found this out I readily indulged them.

Frank Gillmore was an Englishman too, though head of Actors' Equity for so many years that most people thought of him as American-born. He and his wife became our close friends, and often brought their two daughters to our social affairs. Ruth, one of the loveliest girls I think I have ever seen, married a Florentine and went to Italy to live. The other, Margalo, was a little stiffer in her manner, not quite so much at ease. However, when she stepped on a stage, all her diffidence vanished, and she acted with complete assurance and grace. Anyone who saw her with Leslie Howard in *Berkeley Square*, or later in *The Women*, will know what I mean. I married Margalo, a few years later, to Bob Ross, a gifted actor who

had been with Eva LeGallienne's Civic Repertory Theatre, and then turned director.

Some of the other players on whom we depended in those early days of the Guild were Walter Abel, Sidney Blackmer, Leo G. Carroll, Boris Karloff, Tessa Kosta, Raymond Massey, Basil Rathbone, and Cornelia Otis Skinner. Tessa Kosta, whose *Song of the Flame* is still vividly remembered by all those who saw it, was one of our first volunteers, and is still going strong. So is Frances Starr, whom I shall always consider one of the best actresses of our time. I saw her recently on television, giving a magnificent performance, and I could not help thinking what a boon this medium has been to the profession. Whatever else its faults, TV has given employment to many old friends of mine, and I often turn it on just to watch for those dear, familiar faces.

As the Guild work grew heavier, we hit on the idea of farming out the reading of lessons each Sunday afternoon to some of the talent that was hanging around. I must say that the texts sounded a lot more sonorous when read by Grant Mitchell or Ernest Truex than by me or my assistant.

As my seventh year at the Little Church drew to a close, a conspiracy was formed to tender me a banquet. Uncle Dan Frohman, who was still hale and hearty, was chairman of the committee. Irvin S. Cobb came back from Kansas to attend, and Otis Skinner cut short a sojourn in Europe. David Belasco was among those who sat down at table, as were Winthrop Ames and Burns Mantle and a hundred other good souls whose names were respected in the theater. The banquet hall at the Ritz-Carlton was full of beaming faces wherever I looked. I remember Senator Robert F. Wagner, Judge Robert L. Luce, and my old friend Colonel Walter Scott of Butler Brothers. (Incidentally, Scott's funeral, a few years later, was one of the most unusual we ever held at the church. It was attended by the MacDuffs, the Camerons, the MacDonalds, the Bruces, and half a dozen other Scottish clans, all rigged out in their tartans. Even the organ sounded like a bagpipe, playing a medley of gay Scottish airs.)

Many newspaper people as well as theater people had turned out for the banquet. At the urging of Mrs. William Brown Meloney I had written several articles for the Sunday magazine section of the *Herald Tribune*. She was there, with Bye Dudley of the *Evening World* and my pal Heywood Broun. When it came Broun's turn to speak, he described our work with the breadline, and then he went on to speak of the Little Church's fight to remain where it was.

"I am for the preservation of all places hallowed and made familiar by long usage and tradition," he said, "but I am especially all for Dr. Ray and his fight to preserve the Little Church Around the Corner and all it does. . . . It is an edifice which has loomed large in the life of every New Yorker. . . . It is a lovely church; and one of the pleasantest things about it—it has grass in front!" (Of course, it hasn't grass out in front any more, for at Cardinal Spellman's suggestion we planted it to ivy. Ivy grew for him, he told us, up at St. Patrick's, and it is doing as well here.)

The famous Father Duffy of the "Fighting Sixty-ninth" was one of the speakers at the banquet. I knew him well, having met him many times at the Lambs' Club where, I fear, I rather cramped his style. That was because DeWolf Hopper had taken it upon himself to act as keeper of my morals. He would say to Father Duffy, "You'd better watch your language tonight, Padre, Dr. Ray is going to be here!" Father Duffy would then blunt the edge of his vigorous style, for he carried a treasure house of pungent stories in his head, and told them with gusto.

DeWolf, it goes almost without saying, got up to give one more rendition of "Casey at the Bat." He had made this recitation so completely his own that when his last wife, Hedda Hopper, mentioned in her book that someone else had dared to do it, I was certain I detected a note of indignation. In spite of his many marriages, DeWolf Hopper was a man of very proper instincts. A certain "lady with a past," at one period, underwent a religious awakening and often came to my rectory office for spiritual advice. DeWolf was seriously alarmed lest I become involved in some kind of gossip, and went out of his way to warn me against her. I assured him that

the lady was quite sincere in her reform, and had no interest in me whatsoever as a man. "Besides," I couldn't help taunting him, "you know very well that those who live in glass houses shouldn't throw stones!"

DeWolf threw up his hands. "All right!" he conceded. "All right, you win! But you've got to admit I *married* the woman every time!" As indeed he did—he married six times. His third wife, Edna Wallace Hopper, who achieved such success in the beauty business, was our guest of honor recently at an opening of the Guild. She seemed as gay and lively as when I first saw her with George M. Cohan in *South of Boston* in 1908! Another of those women who seem to have found the secret of imperishable youth. . . .

Mollie and I often went to Otto Kahn's renaissance mansion at 1100 Fifth Avenue, to be guests at a dinner or reception in honor of some international star. On one occasion it was the actor-director of the French national theater at the Odéon, M. Fermin Gémier, who had come over to do *The Merchant of Venice*. The guests were hardly less distinguished—Alexander Woollcott, Arthur Brisbane, Hendrik Willem Van Loon, Stark Young, George W. Wickersham, Adolph Zukor, Maurice Gest, Walter Damrosch, Norman Bel Geddes, and many other notables of stage and screen. I was always fascinated by the ease with which Mrs. Kahn could change from one language to another. I have seen her, where the guest of honor was the great Réjane or Sarah Bernhardt, preside over a truly cosmopolitan crowd and receive Frenchmen, Germans, Spaniards, speaking to each in succession in his native tongue, with the greatest ease and fluency. Her guests were always amused, however, by one incongruous touch at these imperial receptions. The man who took your wraps as you entered the front door, and hung them away for you, always pointedly displayed his little silver platter intended for tips. I am sure the Kahns never knew this, and certainly no one ever had the temerity to tell them. But it did seem strange, in the midst of so much grandeur, to be expected to come up with a quarter or dime!

Before her marriage, Mrs. Kahn had been Annie Wolf, daughter

of a well-known banking family, and so she had always been accustomed to wealth. She always looked to me as though she were carved out of marble, though in truth she was a handsome and very elegant woman. In later years she was regarded as something of a renegade by her family, for she turned Episcopalian—no doing of mine, I add quickly, for she became a communicant of St. Bartholomew's, uptown. She was socially ambitious, and eventually both her daughter and granddaughter married English titles.

Otto Kahn, on the other hand, remained a very simple man. He had shown enough interest in the Little Church to subsidize Ishbel Ross's book, *Through the Lich-Gate,* and he usually came to mass on Christmas Eve. He dropped in frequently at our Monday afternoon teas. All this gave Mabel Gerry, who was always looking for new recruits for the faith, the idea that perhaps Otto Kahn might be "converted" as well as his wife. She gave a big dinner party for them at her father's house, where the Hotel Pierre now stands. Mrs. Kahn seemed quite pleased with this honor, but her husband took it pretty much in his stride. He was too old a hand himself at the game of diplomacy not to see the hook.

I think also he was a little embarrassed by all this, and felt he owed me some explanation for his failure to respond, for one day he sent for me to come and have lunch with him at his office. "Dr. Ray," he said, as he dipped his spoon into the shredded wheat and milk which constituted his meal, "I am not a particularly good Jew. I don't keep the tenets of my religion. On the other hand, I am not particularly prepared to become a Christian, either. I am something of a Deist in my beliefs, as Jefferson was—yet I love the Little Church and am interested in everything you are doing and planning. I have given a great deal of thought as to whether or not I should be baptized, and I have decided against it. I have decided against it because people would say, 'Look at Otto Kahn! He has attained to everything but the Union League Club, and now he has turned Christian so he can get into that!' I would hate that—you know how much I would hate it!"

I told him I understood perfectly and honored his position. I be-

lieve all religions are true, and if honestly followed, lead the way to God. I do not believe that Episcopalians, or even Christians, hold a monopoly. I had never urged him, or anyone, to change his religion, and was not starting now. I told him I valued his friendship as such, and hoped he would always feel free to come to the Little Church whenever he wanted to. We had a very pleasant luncheon hour which served to clear the atmosphere—but I gathered that he did not think too highly of what conversion had done for his wife. "Besides," he added with a smile, "if being baptized doesn't do me any more good than it did Annie, I'd better stay as I am!"

There were many rumors that in the last years of his life Otto Kahn did become a Christian. This was not so. With Hitler's persecution of the Jews in Germany, his interest in his own people was greatly revived, and he helped many refugees. Still, he never lost touch with the Little Church, and when he died Mrs. Kahn called me up and asked me to come to the house. I responded, and at her request said a number of prayers for this man I so greatly esteemed, before his body was taken to the synagogue where the funeral was held.

Otto Kahn lived like one of the Medici, and when he died he was comparatively poor. He made a fortune in Wall Street, yet strangely enough Barney Baruch said he never considered Otto Kahn a very good businessman. He was prodigal with money where the arts were concerned, and spent so much in support of the Met that he said himself his initials, O. H., should stand for Opera House. He also spent a vast amount on such productions as *The Miracle*, and on Eva LeGallienne's Civic Repertory Theatre. His mansion on Fifth Avenue, in which he gratified his love of the beautiful, is now occupied by the Sisters of the Sacred Heart.

Barney Baruch was another man who remained true to his faith, though his wife and his children were all Episcopalians. He tells a wonderful story of how he made his first money. His mother, who belonged to the Portuguese Sephardim, called him one day on the phone to remind him that the next day would be Yom Kippur. That

is the Day of Atonement, and the most sacred day in the whole Jewish calendar. She made him promise he would go to synagogue to observe it, and also refrain from all work, according to custom. He didn't want to do this, for he had planned to go into Wall Street the next day and sell a block of stock he had bought for investment. However, he promised, and the following day remained home and fasted, and never lifted a receiver even to ask how stock quotations were going. The following morning, he says, when he went to the Exchange, he found his stocks had doubled in value. By staying at home, he had made a hundred thousand dollars!

We had a christening here at the church one time, with Barney Baruch as one of the godparents. The other was Clare Boothe Luce, who was an Episcopalian before being converted to the Roman Catholic Church by Bishop Sheen.

Her husband, Henry Luce, is a stanch Presbyterian and a steward of that church. Luce's uncle, Judge Robert L. Luce, who helped the publisher when he was establishing *Time*, was one of the Sachems of Tammany and a grand old man. I knew him well, for he attended Transfiguration for forty years, and had accepted my invitation to become honorary president of the Little Church Family. Until his fatal illness, he made his home at the Manhattan Hotel, where most of the big Democrats lived in those days, and often invited our curates over for breakfast. He had planned out his whole funeral in advance, and said he was going to have a full high mass, with everything that could be done for him, both according to Roman and Episcopal rites.

Now, ritual as elaborate as this is very rare these days, and I did not dare trust myself to undertake it. However, I had a curate, Father A. E. MacLaughlin, who had studied all the fine points of ceremony, and I put him in charge. He had some radically divergent points of view to satisfy, for the chief mourners were Presbyterian, the deceased had been Episcopal, and the Tammany warriors, with whom the church was filled, were Roman Catholic almost to a man! A simple old rector from Poughkeepsie, long a friend of the church, came down on that occasion to see for himself what "high-jinks"

these Anglicans and Romans could put on together when they decided to combine. During the service I could see him out of the tail of my eye, sitting just pop-eyed. The next week he described it in his parish magazine as the "most extraordinary service I have ever seen in my life!"—surely a Christian understatement.

Another house to which Mollie and I were often invited was the home of Nellie and Francis Rogers, a delightful couple who were friends of the Skinners as well as ourselves. Otis and Maud Skinner, Mollie and I, often found ourselves sitting comfortably around the Rogers' board, listening to Nellie's inimitable stories. She was a perfect little mimic, taking people off to the least gesture and intonation, and telling wonderful Irish stories which she had written herself. The funny part of it was that she had been brought up in the rarefied atmosphere of Southampton society, and had never been on the professional stage. No one knew how she did it. But she captivated everyone, and Otis Skinner would listen to her attentively as though she had been Duse. As the years went on, her health began to fail and she was sent to a sanitarium. She was there so long we almost despaired of her ever getting out. But then her husband, Frank, one of the finest musicians at the Juilliard, fell ill himself. Nellie knew he needed her, and to everyone's amazement she mustered enough strength to come back home and nurse him. Nor did she relapse even after Frank died—she was completely restored to health, and never has known an ill day since. Of recent years, she has been leading the most active life imaginable, conducting artists about the country on tours, and trotting all over the civilized planet. She is one of the most striking examples I have ever known of the power of the mind to cure the ills of the body.

Maud Durbin Skinner, who was usually the quietest member of the party, was an attractive woman of unusual charm. She had great delicacy of feeling—a Mrs. Moonlight quality that was elusive and unworldly. It was perfectly obvious that her husband adored her. I saw her for the last time one Christmas Eve when she came down to the church to see the decorations. She had been ill, and could not come to the midnight service. I walked around with her, and we

knelt and said a few prayers in the chapel before going in to admire the high altar. She looked thin and rather pale, but I had no idea she was so near to her death. The next day I received a phone call from her daughter Cornelia, and learned with sorrow that Maud Durbin Skinner had just passed away. The service I held for her at her house was in keeping with the woman herself, sweet and loving and completely unpretentious.

Six years later, Cornelia called me up once again, and told me that her father was dying. The star who introduced *Kismet* and so many other plays was then eighty-three, but his mind remained clear and lucid till the last. I was with him when he died. Today we have a memorial plaque in the church, designed by Paul Manship, with Otis Skinner's masque on it. It was most fitting that he should be remembered so, for he had become the second president of the Episcopal Actors' Guild, after the death of George Arliss. He and his wife had spent their vacations, when he was not on the road, in the quiet and peace of Woodstock, Vermont. They had asked to be buried there, and that is where they lie now, in sight of the snow-capped peak of Mont Calm.

I have known their daughter, Cornelia Otis Skinner, since she made her debut. She is a talented actress, but her best qualities appear in the sketches she writes for herself. In private life she is Mrs. Alden Blodgett, and her husband manages her bookings and engagements. They have one son, Otis, who is graduating from law school and will soon be ready to enter public life. Earlier, however, he attended St. Paul's Academy, and it seems that Cornelia, planning to visit him at one time, went out and bought herself a new mink coat. She did this, she claims, so her son would not have to be ashamed of her before all his fellow-students. But when she got off the train, almost the first words she heard, were: "Now, Mother, please remember that you're not to be Cornelia Otis Skinner up here—just plain Mrs. Blodgett." Then his eyes landed on the new mink coat. "What it *that*?" he gasped in horror. She had done quite the wrong thing, for it appears that St. Paul parents are so ultra-exclusive they wear nothing but old English tweeds! However,

when Cornelia recovered her aplomb, she wrote a most amusing sketch about it which she called "The Mink-Coat Mothers" and sold to *The New Yorker*. Everything that happens to her is grist for her mill, for she has an inspired sense of humor and is a true creative spirit.

Young Otis is fond of his mother, but does not let her fame overshadow his existence. He has a mind of his own and lives his own life. A short while ago, Cornelia was here at an Actors' Guild affair, and we spent some time talking. "Dr. Ray," she said, "Otis has reached the age where he tells me nothing whatever about his girl friends, and I wouldn't dream of asking. But just promise me one thing, will you please? If he comes to you to get married, telegraph me the name of the bride!" It seemed to me a reasonable enough request, representing the very modest demands of the present-day mother.

I could hardly finish talking about Cornelia Otis Skinner without making mention of her abiding loyalties. Roland Young had long been one of her father's best friends. Although he had earned a great deal of money, both in pictures and on the stage, he had been ill a long time before he died and had used up his resources. He was not only broke, but had fallen into debt. Cornelia and her husband willingly shouldered all expenses for his funeral, and I conducted the services for Roland Young from their house in the Sixties. They paid his creditors as well. The Skinners, I may add, both father and daughter, were among those lucky stage folk who understood how to keep the money they earned. I could name a few others who have managed well too—Fred Astaire, Helen Hayes, Katharine Cornell, the two Lunts, and, surprisingly enough, Tallulah Bankhead. But actors' pockets are rarely well-lined, and our confidential list of beneficiaries at the Guild would probably shock you.

Times are changing, however. I begin to see signs in these last few years that actors are learning the value of a dollar. For this I think the United States Treasury might take an inadvertent bow. The necessity of keeping income-tax records has forced many performers to work through business managers or agents, who can keep

matters straight and submit a strict accounting. This has worked both ways, and redounded to the advantage of the player himself. Even so, few performers will ever die as well-off as David Warfield, who was one of our greatest stars for so many years. He used to haunt the Lambs' Club in shabby old clothes, frayed at the cuffs and out at the heels; but when his will was read, it was found he was the richest actor on the American stage.

CHAPTER XXII

I Take a Pulpit in Florence, Italy—Mollie's First Operation—Mussolini—Myron C. Taylor—Rome and St. Peter's—London and Home—A Talk with My Mother.

In 1931 I received an offer to spend two months in Italy, exchanging pulpits with the Rev. Canon Kilian A. Stimpson, whom I had known in Texas, but who was now rector of the American Church in Florence. We were tremendously excited at this prospect, for Kathryna and I were eager to do some exploring together, while Mollie had many old ties to renew. She had once attended the Convent of the Petite École, outside of Florence, and had many friends there. She spoke Italian like a native.

We booked passage and made ready to sail in a couple of weeks. Meanwhile Mollie went to see her doctor about a small, nagging chest pain that had been troubling her—and, I recall, Channing Pollock sent us a couple of tickets for a revival of *The Fool.* It's funny how you remember small things like that—for it was the morning after we went to see this play, spending such a pleasant evening, that Mollie said to me, "There is something I must tell you." She now revealed that her doctor had told her she must go to the hospital for an immediate operation! She had known this for several

days, but typically had put off telling me as long as she could, to spare me anxiety.

We postponed our trip, and Mollie went to the hospital to have the surgery done. It was pronounced very successful, and so after a few weeks' delay, we set sail as planned. Besides Kathryna's nurse, Florence Wood, we had in our party a couple of friends, Virginia and Elizabeth Nicholls. Florence was so seasick that we had to wait on her and nurse her all the way across—she has always, poor soul, been a bad sailor. But we finally reached Naples, just in time for the fierce summer heat, and went on to Rome.

Mussolini was then consolidating his position as dictator, and the first intimation we had of his power was when a young chap who had come over with us said to me at the hotel, "I don't know how to explain it, but everywhere I go I am followed by a gendarme!" The young man was a foreign correspondent for *Time*, and he soon found out what the trouble was. His publication had printed a very critical article on Il Duce, and he was no longer welcome. He was served a seventy-two-hour notice to get out of the country—no hearing, no appeals!

It's inconceivable to me now that this didn't give us pause. But actually, we were much more impressed at the time by the fact that the trains ran on time, that the debris had been cleared away from the old ruins so one could see them nicely, and that everything was so beautifully clean! Like most other American and English travelers as purblind as ourselves, we were inclined to be delighted. Also, the money exchange was much in our favor. We had a cook, chauffeur, kitchen maid, dining-room maid, and butler for less than we paid our cook back home. Dr. Stimpson had told his cook before leaving to be sure to serve us an English breakfast, and the first morning we were faced with a steaming and aromatic omelet. It was so delicious that Mollie complimented the cook—which proved to be a great mistake, for every morning after that we had omelet for breakfast, no matter what else we ordered. But all of the food was delicious.

The rectory was a lovely old place and beautifully kept. The

American church was connected with the consulate, and so everyone who arrived from home came to see us. The dining room had a huge refectory table at which we served Sunday luncheon to all Americans in town—an open-house affair.

Florence is like a small country village. You meet the same people at breakfast, lunch, and dinner. We were told upon our arrival that the social arbiter of the American colony was Mrs. Branch of Richmond and Quaker Hill, and that when we received an invitation to her villa, we had better respond as we would to royalty. The invitation soon came, and I must say that at her house we met a great many interesting people. Among them were our neighbors, the Spaldings, whose son was Albert Spalding, the violinist, and the Myron C. Taylors. Mr. Taylor was a businessman who showed a most intelligent interest in international affairs. This was one year before he replaced J. P. Morgan on the board of United States Steel and eight years before he was sent to the Vatican by Franklin D. Roosevelt. Of course at that time no one even dreamed that the United States would send a presidential envoy to the Pope, and least of all an Episcopalian. But it worked out very well, until illness forced Taylor to sail back home. He and his wife owned a magnificent estate on Long Island, which he has only recently presented to the Bishop of New York as the country site for an Episcopal school.

It had happened that some time before going to Italy we had had the pleasure of entertaining a young man from Venice. We had seen quite a lot of him, and so, when he learned we were going to Italy that summer, he wrote to his father to show us some hospitality. We went to Venice and registered at the Excelsior, one of the most beautiful hotels on the Grand Canal. To my astonishment, we were shown up to a suite of rooms that opened out into practically one whole floor! There was a drawing room almost as large as the ballroom at the Waldorf, individual bedrooms and dressing rooms for everyone, including Florence and Kathryna, and fresh flowers everywhere. I thought, "Oh, great heavens, they think we're American millionaires!" and I rushed downstairs to explain to the clerk. It was then that I learned we were guests of the management! Our

young man's father not only owned the Excelsior, but several other hotels on the Italian Riviera. That evening our host was on hand to greet us at dinner, and to apologize for not being there when we arrived. He had been out of town on business. All the time we were in Venice we were entertained like characters in *The Tales of Hoffmann*, and could pay for nothing. And the gondolas with their singing gondoliers glided by beneath our windows.

I had very little to do at the American church, beyond the two morning services. After that the day was free. I never tired of going to watch the Great Baptistry at the cathedral in Florence, for it seems that all children born in the city must be brought there for baptism. All day long there would be three or four priests lined up with their little parishioners, awaiting their turn; and I thought as I stood looking on, "Just like the Little Church Around the Corner and its weddings!" For no sooner was one ceremony completed than another began.

Another sight that intrigued me was the old Ponte Vecchio, the bridge across the Grand Canal that was piled high with shops. There you could see the most entrancing little caskets and boxes covered with jewels—rubies, emeralds, amethysts, and quite inexpensive for all the stones were imperfect. But so beautiful! I spent much more than I should have on presents to bring home, only to find later that I could have bought much the same things cheaper at Altman's, without the nuisance of packing. Italians might get them cheaper, but Americans can haggle all day and still overpay. It's a good deal like fencing—Europeans are good at it, but it simply is not our national sport.

Our chauffeur was a skillful driver, but inclined to regard his profession as a challenge. He was especially happy when we encountered another vehicle on one of those steep mountain roads and it became a matter of life or death which should go first. Then came a wild cascade of shrill Italian epithets, with strong gesticulations, which would be answered in kind from the car up ahead. Just as it seemed they would charge headlong into each other's motors, some mysterious understanding was arrived at, and

they would pussyfoot around each other in the road like two tomcats leaving the scene of a fight. After it was all over, our driver would turn around to us with a beaming "Okay!," the only English word he knew, and we would wipe the dew from our faces. But the scenery was worth it.

Kathryna had picked up a playmate, a little girl whose mother had married an Italian count. She too had a nursemaid, and so all four of them, the two nanas and the two little girls in straw hats and ginghams, used to go everywhere together. In no time Kathryna was taking her own part in Italian, and acquiring the language in the natural way.

Our butler was one of those Italian major-domos who take charge of everything, the cooking, the cleaning, the gardening, all domestic arrangements. He also did the marketing; and naturally we had not been there long before a well-meaning acquaintance warned us that we were being robbed. But Mollie just laughed. If our butler was making a little on the groceries, charging us slightly higher than he himself paid, she had no objection—the accounts were still much cheaper than she could manage for herself. And of course it is hopeless to try to change this custom anyway; the steward in Italy has for centuries past been receiving his lagniappe.

From our rectory windows, you could see the great funeral processions taking place in the city, and an Italian funeral procession is something an American can hardly forget. In Florence they have bands, with priests walking afoot, and mourners and attendants all in heavy black. Princess Hélène of Rumania and her mother both came to service while we were in Florence, and both were in mourning. They wore Italian-style mourning, which meant that their thick black veils fell all the way to the hems of their skirts.

The trappings of death and the details of obsequy are much more important to Italians, by and large, than to us over here. There was a terrible controversy while we were there, when the husband of one of our parishioners was killed in a duel. The question arose of where he was to be buried, for the American woman to whom he was married—an acquaintance of ours from Litchfield, as it hap-

pened—had been formerly divorced. This made it impossible for him, a Roman Catholic, to be buried in his own church. What should be done? The body waited while the matter was thrashed out, and it began to look as though we would be the ones to hold the service. But he came from an old papal family, with long allegiance to Rome, and at last the needful dispensation came through. There was a High Mass in Florence, and then his body was taken to the Eternal City to be laid away in the tomb of his ancestors.

In view of the importance Italians place on death, I wonder what they made of the small cemetery in back of the American church. What do you suppose was buried there—deceased Americans? Not at all! It was a cemetery for pets, and filled with American dogs, cats, and canaries. Each tiny grave was surmounted by its own little marble cap; and while I was never called upon to conduct a service for a four-footed compatriot, I have often opened the gates for some American who came in sadly to bury the small companion he held in his arms.

Before leaving Italy, we made a trip down to Rome and visited all the ruins restored by Mussolini. I had always had a great curiosity to see the catacombs, and it was an eerie sensation to walk where the early martyrs had walked, and to see their names incised on the altar-tombs and walls of the crypts. You never quite believe in them until you are there. Then on to St. Peter's, the largest church in the world, and so surprising to visitors because it looks so little like a church. So many things are going on inside!—a mass being sung before the high altar, a preacher thundering out a sermon from a pulpit over there, and scores of tourists milling all about, while others kneel and pray. Before the image of St. Peter, innumerable pilgrims were waiting in line to kiss the statue's great toe. Florence said to Kathryna, "Now you must kiss the toe, too, as long as you are here. That is what they do in Rome." We all got in line, but I could see Kathryna frowning as all those people touched their lips to the stone. She was a modern young woman, who had been thoroughly instructed about sanitation and germs. I saw she was struggling between repugnance and duty, so when it came her turn, I

whisked out my handkerchief and unobtrusively gave the toe a good, thorough rub! She turned around and smiled, and I gave her a wink—and to this day, Kathryna's clearest memory of Rome is St. Peter's toe.

Half our Roman Catholic friends back home had loaded us with rosaries before we sailed, and asked us to have them blessed if we received an audience with the Pope. We did—Mollie, Florence, and Kathryna dressed for the occasion in the correct black dresses, myself in a dinner jacket. Pius XI was a very kindly man who spoke to us in Italian, blessed all the rosaries we had brought, and presented us with others. All in all, we came away loaded with relics and mementos for our friends, which were gladly received by them when we got back to New York.

We decided to go to Paris and London before returning home, so we placed a substitute in the American church to serve till Dr. Stimpson arrived. He is now, by the way, rector of St. Mark's in Milwaukee, and often occupies the pulpit at the Little Church when he comes east.

One of my vestrymen, Colonel Clair G. Irish, has long divided his time between New York and France, and we stopped off at his country house in the suburbs of Paris. From there we made trips into the city and out through the French countryside. I found that whereas, when I was in Italy I could think of nothing but French words, now I could think of nothing but Italian! I seemed doomed to gestures and sign language wherever I went.

Florence was impatient to see England again, and had Kathryna in a tizzy of anticipation to see the changing of the guards. We slipped across the Channel and put up at a small family hotel not far from Buckingham Palace. This was for the convenience of Florence and Kathryna, who every day went to stand in the drizzle and watch that most fascinating of all British ceremonies. But the jewels in the Tower, the old tombs of Westminster, and the dome of St. Paul's, all came in for their share of excitement too.

It was here in London, however, that we were put in our places. While Florence had eaten with us and Kathryna all over Italy, she

now suddenly vanished at mealtime and took our daughter with her! As she explained it to Mollie: "In Italy, Mrs. Ray, I was considered a nursery governess, and it was perfectly proper for me to come to the table. But here in England the classes are *very distinctly marked.* In sight of the British I am not a nursery governess, but only a nursemaid. So as not to give the impression that I am stepping out of my class, I will eat in the maids' dining room and take Kathryna with me." To argue was futile, and so it was done. We did not see our child again at table until the dear old Bishop of London invited all three of us to dinner. We thought the hour too late for a child and tried to excuse her, but the Bishop insisted on Kathryna's coming, and changed the meal to luncheon. No one can be such hosts as the English when they set out to be charming, and Kathryna was in fairyland. The Bishop of London reached down, took her by the hand, and led her off to show her all around his wonderful house—Fulham Palace.

And so the trip ended, as all perfect things must, and we sailed back home. I wish that honesty did not compel me to say that I made something of a ninny of myself on the Mussolini question when I got back home. As I have said, we were impressed by the punctual running of the railroads and other improvements, and had not the faintest suspicion of what it all really meant. I told my parishioners I thought the Italian people were happier and better off than they had been for years—which might have been true, if Mussolini had not gone on to war and aggression. Only one of my listeners, as I remember it now, gave me an argument. I wound up my panegyric one day by saying, "Why, before Il Duce, Venice hadn't been cleaned up for a thousand years!"

"*Should* it have been?" this lady asked coldly—and I was stumped for an answer.

My mother and my sister, Alice Sledge Ray, had spent the summer at Elm Ridge while we were away. Now, after we had settled down a bit after our return, my mother sought me out when I was alone and sat down to talk. "Son," she said calmly, "while you

were away I discovered a lump in my breast and went to see a doctor. As I was certain, it was cancer. I have lived eighty years and gone through a great many things, and I am not afraid of death. I have made up my mind not to have an operation, not at my age, and the only thing I really regret is that this should come so soon after Mollie's own trouble. It might give her fears. Of course, I will do all that can be done in the way of X-ray and radio therapy, but I will not permit surgery. The doctors say I may live for several months yet, and I only hope it will not be too much trouble for the family, for I don't want to go to a hospital. My hearing is bad anyway, and I want to stay home."

I could not hold back the tears, for I had never known a time when my aristocratic old mother had not been the core and mainstay of my life. Even when we were separated, she always seemed near me. Like all sons, I had known that some day I must lose her, but I was not ready yet—nor, indeed, would I ever be. Her voice was steady, for she had the desperate courage of those who must die, while I had the grief of those who can do nothing to prevent it.

"I want you to promise me," she said, "that when the end comes, you will take me back home to lie beside your father. You are my son, and I want you to be the one to put me in the ground and say the last prayers."

I gave her my promise—how unfaltering she was, and how implicitly and firmly she had always walked with God! When she began to grow weaker, we fixed up a room for her at the rectory, with two nurses in attendance. There, all through the winter, she was kept as easy and comfortable as possible.

But now Mollie—who had seemed to be quite all right in Italy—was ordered back to the hospital for a second operation! To our relief, she made an excellent recovery. She felt better again, and the doctors were confident that all would go well.

Spring came at last, and the azaleas in the close burst into pink bloom. My mother was failing, and in the last week of May they sent for me to come to her room. I gave her the last sacraments, and she died quite peacefully. Later a service was held at the church,

with some of her friends in attendance, including Alma Clayburgh and Miss Cassity Mason, head of the Castle in Tarrytown, the school where my sister was teaching.

That evening I boarded a train with her for the long last trip to Mississippi, and we went back to Madison. I buried her in the old family plot, with the big stone cross and the Ray arms upon it. The next morning I went to take a look at the old plantation, which she had kept all these years out of sentiment's sake. How everything had changed! I saw many of the old neighbors and the old-time friends who remembered my parents; then back to New York, to be met by Mollie and Kathryna at the train. Their faces were turned up to mine as the train pulled in. They were both dressed in black, both sharing my sorrow. I still was not alone. . . .

CHAPTER XXIII

The High Cost of Modern Churches—Dr. Norman Vincent Peale—Gifts and Endowments—Jessie Van Brunt—Elijah P. Smith and the Vestibule Screens—Mrs. Thomas Burchell and the Altar Railing—Sanctus Bell vs. Candlesticks—Susan Ruth Budd and Our Lady of the Garden—The Gerry Madonna.

PEOPLE ASK ME OFTEN, "How does a New York church support itself today, when the parishes are dwindling?" It is not that attendance has fallen off, for churchgoing in the United States is at an all-time high; but no church can depend solely on the financial backing of a few wealthy men, as it did in the old days. Income taxes have drained off the surpluses of the great private fortunes, and our congregations today are made up of business people who live in apartments, or in housing developments, and who give what they can. That is often very generous, but it does not meet the enormous expense of maintaining a church in a modern metropolis. My own salary for years has gone back into the church, with more added to it; and I could name many other clergymen whose circumstances permit of it, who plow their earnings back. One very bad aspect of this is immediately apparent—that a clergyman may be "called" by a Vestry more with an eye to his financial resources than to his other qualifications. This is terribly unjust to the young

and the poor. In fact, to help guard against the day when rectors may be expected to work without pay, I have never waived my right to a salary. I take it and cash it, even though it filters back into the treasury. If the laborer is worthy of his hire, then so is the preacher who labors in the vineyard.

I could describe to you one of the biggest churches in New York, one of the richest and most fashionable—almost always in debt. Why? Because the modern parishioner of wealth, instead of leaving stocks and bonds, gives beautiful bronze front doors and handsome memorials. This contributes to the beauty of the church, to be sure, but it doesn't pay bills; and when you have a huge parish house to maintain, with all its civic obligations and activities, you are constantly and chronically in need of more funds. This is one reason why, in some of the larger churches, you will find that the fee for wedding music is at least a hundred dollars, with another hundred dollars for "opening the church."

Of course, rich people still do die and leave money to the church. One of the richest parishes in New York long had a rector who was blessed with the knack of whispering just the right word at just the right time. It was nothing for him to come back from the reading of a parishioner's will with another large legacy—one hundred thousand dollars, two hundred thousand at a time. I have never known a man like him. I envied him mightily, and my Vestry envied his Vestry a great deal more. This went on for years, and today, even though he has retired, his church is solidly financed and one of the wealthiest in existence, outside of old Trinity.

Trinity is the only church left on Manhattan Island with its old parish "glebe." It owns a great deal of real estate from its original grants, and Trinity revenues pay half the expenses of the New York Episcopal diocese.

Next to Trinity in wealth are the old Collegiate Churches, also left over from Colonial days. There are three or four of these Reformed Dutch churches remaining, probably the best-known being Marble Collegiate, just around the corner from us on Fifth Avenue. This owes its popularity to Dr. Norman Vincent Peale, who has

amassed quite a personal fortune with his best-selling books, his radio and television appearances, and his lectures and tours. I can usually tell when Dr. Peale is back in town and scheduled to preach, for there will be a queue of admirers all up and down the Avenue. These people wait in line of a Sunday the way bobby-soxers do uptown at the Paramount. The ushers take care of all the overflow they can in an auxiliary chapel that is hooked up for sound, and those who can't get in at all often wander around the corner and drop in on us. I know Dr. Peale well, for we are very close neighbors, and I have sometimes accused him of borrowing very freely from Mary Baker Eddy, Dr. Coué, and others. He takes all the joshing with a shrug and a smile, for he has heard the same charge a good many times.

The cost of repairs alone can empty a church treasury. Take the plight of Grace Church not so very long ago. The steeple was about to topple into the street, and the cost of building a new one was four hundred thousand dollars. If it had not been for the large contributions made by Wanamaker's, then just across the way, and by residents of the neighborhood, the work could not have been done. Many of those residents, incidentally, were Jewish; and once again I was struck by the open-handed manner in which Jews support our projects. They gave more than one hundred thousand dollars for the Grace Church steeple, or a fourth of the money needed.

Another expense in the maintenance of Episcopal churches, as also in the Roman, is the cost of remaining open all through the day. It is hard to think of God's door being locked when someone wants to enter, yet most Protestant churches open only on Sunday, or for some special service. We open our doors at eight in the morning, and do not close until six. The Church of the Ascension on lower Fifth Avenue does better than this—it never closes at all, and its beautiful altar with its great mural painting by John La Farge behind it is accessible to anyone, all through the night. Go there sometime at three in the morning, and you will find sleepless people seeking relief and reassurance in prayer.

Much of the beauty of the Little Church today is due to private endowments received in the past. In the late twenties, Mollie and I had made the acquaintance of a most unusual lady from Brooklyn. She was Jessie Van Brunt, who lived with her sister in the old Dutch house her ancestors had built, and whose hobby was churches. Miss Van Brunt was a sweet-faced woman, both serious and whimsical, and she had spent years traveling through Europe with her paintbox, sitting in cathedrals and copying the designs of stained-glass windows. The windows at Chartres, she said, were the most beautiful in the world.

When her friends asked why Miss Van Brunt should give stained-glass windows to churches all over the world, many of them quite able to pay for them themselves, she would reply: "People always seem to act as though Christ loved nobody but the wicked and the poor. You would suppose he cared nothing at all for those who are prosperous and well. Well, I give my windows to rich churches just to remind everyone that Christ loved us all!"

Let me give no one the impression that Miss Van Brunt was an amateur. She took her subject very seriously, and had studied with John La Farge and Kenyon Cox. Her first gift to us was the All Actors' Window, which Walter Hampden unveiled, with Kathryna's help, on a blustery day of March 1930. It was an unusual window, done in the modern manner with bright waving trees and desert sands—the Flight into Egypt—and it was dedicated to those "loyal members of the profession who have given their best to their beloved art and have passed on forgotten or perhaps beyond their own generation of admirers." It is a tribute, in brief, to the Unknown Actor.

In putting together her designs, Miss Van Brunt often used pieces of old glass she had collected from places all over the world. These gave great richness and depth to the color of her windows. I was especially pleased with the window she made in honor of my tenth anniversary in 1933, for in that she used symbols of all the major religions, Hindu, Buddhist, Judaic, Mohammedan, and Christian.

The theme was the Golden Rule, which is the common denominator of all these teachings, and which sums up just about all man knows about living this life. Another of her beautiful productions was the St. Francis Window, next to the Golden Rule Window, which represents scenes from that gentle saint's life. She made it after the death of her sister, for her sister too loved the animals and birds.

Jessie Van Brunt's greatest gift to the Little Church, however, took me quite by surprise. One day after her sister's death, she came to me and said, "You know, Dr. Ray, I remember this dear old church as it originally looked. Then it was the rosy red of old Dutch brick, and was beautiful to see. My heart was quite broken when they covered it with stucco."

I must explain that the second Dr. Houghton, for all his excellent taste in decorating the Lady Chapel, succumbed to his generation's belief that brownstone was beautiful, while brick was common and banal. He had therefore, sometime in the late 1890s, had the outside of the building completely covered with brown stucco, which was supposed to look like brownstone. The same thing was done in pink stucco with lovely old St. Mark's In-The-Bouwerie, which of course is much older than we are, having begun as a chapel on Peter Stuyvesant's farm when the Bowery was an orchard.

The staggering proposal that Miss Van Brunt made to me was that we undertake to remove all the stucco from the brick—and that she would personally foot all the expense! I was perfectly dumfounded. "But," I burst out at last, "have you any idea of how much that would *cost*?" In reply, she simply sat down and wrote out her check for thirty thousand dollars. "And," she said as she arose and pushed the check across the desk, "there will be more when that is gone."

When the door closed after her, I sat there awhile just trying to believe it. Then I reached for my phone. I called Lyman Rhoades, my senior warden, at the Chase National Bank. "I have a check here for thirty thousand dollars," I told him, "to pay for removing

the stucco from the outside of the church." I then went on to explain exactly what had happened. He thought I was crazy. "But do you know the woman?" he demanded. "Do you think the check is good?"

"I am perfectly certain it is," I replied; and of course the check cleared the bank without any questions at all and passed into our account. Then came the architects, the masons, and all the various workmen who had to have a share in completing the job. As the modern-day stucco, which was always crumbling off anyway, was stripped away from its backing, the century-old Holland brick began to appear. It was deep-red and beautiful, a joy to behold. Only on the chapel was the original so far gone that we had to replace it, and even then we were able to get some old bricks from a friend who was working on the Williamsburg restoration. It took more than a year to do the work properly, and it cost Miss Van Brunt something in excess of seventy-five thousand dollars. But that was the way she wanted to spend her money, she said, and she often quoted the words of an old Dutch hymn, "May I be in ceaseless adoration." The sun streaming in daily through the stained-glass windows she had made was one way, she thought, to be in ceaseless adoration. And another way was to preserve the beauty of God's established shrines. The beauty of the Little Church, after its restoration, pleased her so much that she then went on to strip the pink stucco off old St. Mark's.

Upon her death, a few years later, Jessie Van Brunt was buried from our church. As her casket was borne out the front door, it passed beneath an oaken tablet set in the wall of the vestibule, recording the "restoration of the fabric of this church"—which, she was always good enough to say, was done as a testimonial to her friendship for me and all I had done for her. In actual fact, it had been the other way round. Jessie Van Brunt was a woman who could not help receiving kindness from others, since she was the embodiment of kindness herself. She was a poet by nature, a creative person, and sincerely believed that "a thing of beauty is a joy forever." The Little Church is infinitely more beautiful today, in-

side and out, because she loved it; and so long as it stands, her spirit will be part of it, in "ceaseless adoration."

During these years, as opportunity offered, we added much to the beauty and repair of the church. One of our greatest needs from the beginning had been a new organ, and we finally achieved one in 1927. It was first played by Franklin Coates, who started here as the youngest organist and choirmaster in the city. He was a perfectly splendid musician, who went to Europe for additional study, and who was with us until just this last year. Now he and his wife are devoting themselves to a school. We have always had exceptional music, and historically our choir is the first vested choir in an Episcopal church in America. In 1936 we enlarged our organ again, installing the echo section up in the old organ loft that overhangs the nave. It now gives forth with the voice of ten thousand angels—a far cry from the wheezy old parlor organ our founder began with, down in Love Lane!

It is the business of any Vestry to see that its parish is provided for, and that members of property leave, if possible, something for the church. I have known rectors with wonderful bedside manners, who seem to garner in legacies the way Michael the verger used to pull down figs. But personally, I have never been any good at it, and have received many a disappointed look from my board.

In 1926, for example, I was sent to administer the last sacraments to Elijah P. Smith. Mr. Smith was eighty-seven, and since he had been senior warden of Transfiguration, before my arrival, for fifty-odd years, the Vestry was quite justified in hoping that he would remember the church out of what was presumed to be his very great wealth. I was supposed to "speak to him about it" if he failed to mention the matter by himself. But I found the poor old gentleman so extremely senile, and so distressed because his stocks and holdings were no longer worth anything, that I could say nothing. I performed my clerical offices and returned empty-handed.

The bombshell burst after his death when the will was made public. It seemed Mr. Smith had a nephew he thoroughly disap-

proved of for the simple reason that he had married against his wishes. Desiring to cut this nephew off, but still do it legally, he named a few modest bequests to relatives and charities, then left "the residue of my estate to my nephew," etc. He had imagined the residue would be about a dollar. Imagine everyone's indignation when it turned out that old Mr. Smith's stocks had soared in value, and the "residue" of his estate, after his very small bequests, was over two million dollars!

However, I got to know this nephew later, and I must say such a mistake couldn't have happened to a decenter chap. He was fairly amused by his uncle's terrible error, yet all the same grateful. He said to me frankly, "I know Uncle Elijah had no intention of making me rich, but he did all the same; therefore I'd like to do something for him." He knew the old man came from the south of England, and had often spoken of the beauty of the old rood screens he remembered from his boyhood. So he engaged Wilfred E. Anthony, one of the finest of church architects, to design a pair of high oaken screens for our Little Church, based on these originals. This resulted in our narthex screen, which forms a tall, carved partition between the nave and the vestibule, and the chapel screen, which serves the same purpose for the chantry. These magnificent walls are the first things you see as you enter the church, and with their Gothic design and rich gilt and tracery, they give promise of further beauties inside. One of them was inspired by the rood screen in St. Edward's in Leeds, and the other by Lord Shaftesbury's Chapel at Wimborne, St. Giles. The two screens, when completed, were presented by Mr. Smith's daughter, Mrs. Eleanor DeForest Boteler —but it was the "disinherited" nephew who paid for them. And so thus, in a somewhat roundabout way, our senior warden provided for his church.

The old railing we had around the altar was made of brass, a handsome thing in itself, but it did not harmonize with the mellow Tudor oak of its nearby surroundings. Therefore, when Mrs. Alexander Black and Mrs. Frank Ford, Jr., wished to establish a memorial to their mother, they chose to present an oaken railing of

Jacobean brown. Their mother, Mrs. Thomas Burchell, had been president of the Altar Society for years. She had taken great pride and pleasure in her work, mending all the vestments that needed repair, preparing the linen collars that go over stoles, and doing many other indispensable things. She called me "Randy Ray," and bossed me unmercifully. When she was getting out the stoles, she would scowl at me and say, "I declare, Randy Ray, I think it is just scandalous the way you dirty these collars! I ought to get a scrub-cloth and scrub your neck good, and I've a good mind to do it!" But she was such a conscientious and lovable soul that all you could do was laugh at her scolding. We all felt that the choice of this railing was the right memorial for her, she had spent so much of her life around the altar. When the brass railing was taken out I sent it up to St. Martin's, where the rector was the Rev. John C. Johnson, son of my old friend, John Wesley Johnson of St. Cyprian's. I had never forgotten the father's kindness when I preached my first sermon in his church, and I had preserved a long-standing friendship with the son. In fact, many of the fixtures removed from Transfiguration, as renovations went on, were sent up to St. Martin's in the father's name, and are memorials to him.

There is many a story, and often a very human story, behind the seemingly impersonal memorials you find in any church. Our sanctus bell and our candlesticks, for example, are the result of a small but smoldering feud. Miss Mary Chamberlaine, who was a friend of the Triumvirate, had a dearly beloved sister, Mrs. Benjamin Fabens. Mrs. Fabens died and Miss Chamberlaine wanted her sister to have a memorial in the church. She wanted something different, however, from the usual window or plaque, and so she chose a fine sanctus bell to be placed on the steps of the altar. We had never had a sanctus bell before, always using the big twelve-hundred-pound bell in the steeple to ring the benediction. But gifts to the church have to be approved by the members, of course, and Frank R. Ford raised the objection that we had got along all these years with the old bell and he thought we ought to stick to tradition. He was junior warden, and his objection prevailed. Miss Chamber-

laine was thwarted in her desire to give us a bell, and she took it like a lady—though I sometimes imagined I saw a flicker in her eye when she gazed at Mr. Ford.

Time passed, as it will, and it came Mr. Ford's turn. His wife, Helen Sunshine Ford, had died shortly after I arrived at the church, and now, in due course, he wished to present in her memory six great funerary candlesticks to be used in St. Joseph's Chapel. Everyone else was quite willing—but Miss Mary Chamberlaine pointed out dispassionately that the old black candlesticks then in use had been placed about biers at Transfiguration for the better part of a century, and she felt we ought to stick to tradition.

Mr. Ford swallowed hard, but took it like a gentleman. It was not too long, however, before they each came to speak to me. They had decided, after due deliberation and after talking it over, that the church would be better off with *both* a new sanctus bell and six silver candlesticks! I agreed, and so as soon as things could be arranged, the gifts were presented. It was Mr. Ford too who later on paid for the restoration of the close, laying out the paths again, regrading the topsoil, and arranging for permanent upkeep by a landscape architect.

A charming new touch among the rhododendrons was a marble statue of the Madonna, Our Lady of the Garden, put up in memory of Susan Ruth Budd. Miss Budd had been a delightful old lady, an old-time suffragist, who was a familiar sight around the church with her dog. The dog was named Bunda—an Italian Lupina which had once belonged to John Barrymore. The two were a startling sight together, for the dog alone was so unusual he made heads turn—while Miss Budd wore long sweeping skirts and high-buttoned shoes to the day of her death. Often she would take visitors in tow and pilot them around, for she had once been governess to the Aldrich family, and the need to instruct people was still in her blood. I often used to wonder what our visitors thought of us—the little old church with its unconventional ways, and the little old lady in her Gibson-girl clothes! Nevertheless, Susan Ruth Budd

was an individual and an admirable person. She has, I think, one of the nicest epitaphs I have ever seen anywhere. Carved upon the pedestal of the Madonna are the words: *She loved God, His Church, His Birds and His Flowers.*

But by far the most beautiful addition inside the Little Church within the last generation has been the Gerry Madonna, often described as "the loveliest Madonna in America." Artists and architects often come here to see it, quite aside from its religious significance. It stands in a half-domed recess, all by itself, and invariably the visitor who sees it for the first time catches his breath at its dimly lighted beauty.

In 1930 Mabel Gerry and her husband were living in London. We heard from them from time to time; but then, suddenly, came a long cablegram from Mabel. She had seen some of the best doctors in London, she told us, and there was no doubt of the verdict—she had cancer. It was too far advanced for any hope of recovery, and so she was coming home to die. Would we both pray for her, and would I be ready to attend her as soon as she returned?

This was terrible news. I wired back what words I could of courage and comfort, and as soon as her sister Angelica phoned to tell me Mabel was back, I went up to see her. I didn't, by the way, take her any kind of flowers, for she never permitted anything but artificial flowers around her. I never knew why; perhaps she had an allergy.

I found Mabel in reasonable spirits considering the news she had received. We talked a little while, and then we began the saddening business of getting ready for death. She was concerned with making her will, and thought it "unfair" to her husband, F. E. Saxham Drury, that they had been married such a few short years, and he had not benefited more from her wealth. To make up for this, she bequeathed him the lifetime interest on her holdings, and stipulated that her legacies should not be carried out until after his death. She left fifty thousand dollars to my old friend Wallace Gardiner, who by this time was Bishop of New Jersey. And, to my surprise,

she left fifty thousand to Mollie and me. Of course Mollie was her cousin and had always been very close to her, and she doted on Kathryna.

The money would not, in any event, be paid until after Mr. Drury's own death. I admired this man's attitude. Instead of resenting the fact that he had not inherited all of his wife's wealth, as many men would have done, he grieved for her sincerely and was grateful that she had been solicitous of his welfare for the rest of his life. He came to me one day and said he would like to commission a memorial in her name, and that is how we came by our loveliest shrine, the Gerry Madonna.

To make room for its erection, we first removed one of the two baptismal fonts installed by the first Dr. Houghton, considering that the one in the chantry was sufficient for our needs. The extra font was sent up to St. Martin's. It had stood in a rounded alcove at the end of the south transept, and masons now pierced the semicircular walls with tiny Gothic windows. In each arched window was placed a small musical cherub, done in stained glass. When the semicircle was complete, it looked as though a heavenly choir were peering in from a star-studded sky. In the center of the recess was placed the Madonna and Child, a slender and youthful conception carved by the same Oberammergau wood-carvers who had made Michael's memorial. It was backed by a golden screen of heavy filigree, and was richly polychromed. A soft light was pierced into the ceiling above. I have seen this shrine every day now for the last twenty-five years, and it is always as though I were seeing it for the very first time. The setting for *The Miracle* was not more dramatic, and it is seen down the whole long vista of the transept. Mabel would have loved it, though I'm sure she would have made us replace with artificial flowers our daily offering of a seasonal bouquet.

CHAPTER XXIV

The English Countryside—DeWolf Hopper Dies—Mollie's Health —Back Again to England—A Tour of the Netherlands—The Sound of Hitler's Cannon—Mollie's Health Fails—We Return to Litchfield—Her Death.

WHEN KATHRYNA WAS ELEVEN, we went abroad again. This time we were accompanied by a young man, Harold Lemoyne, right out of the Seminary and chosen by me to serve as my curate for the next five years. Harold could drive, so when we reached London we immediately rented an old English Ford. It rattled and wheezed and threatened to fall apart at the very next turn, but it ended by taking us, without serious accident, all over England, Scotland, and Wales.

Our London headquarters was the same as before—the quiet Stafford Hotel so near to the palace—and Florence and Kathryna picked up where they had left off in watching the guard. We went to Tussaud's and to Parliament, and all the usual places; and since this trip was mainly on behalf of Kathryna's education, we all helped her collect postcard pictures to go into her scrapbooks. I have them before me now, dog-eared with much thumbing, a stack of albums filled with views of towns and cathedrals—Chester and Canterbury, Winchester and Wells, Gloucester and Glastonbury, and dozens of

others. As Kathryna complained, Harold would "always keep going till he came to a church," and the only thing they ever squabbled about was the great number of ecclesiastical stops on our tour. She had found the Tower of London much more exciting.

I had promised Kathryna that when we got to Lincoln, she would meet some old ancestors of hers; and sure enough, there in the half-ruined chapel of the Wrays, or Rays, she saw a great-grandfather and great-grandmother, several times removed, lying in stone effigy atop their marble tombs. My father's people had come from this place, but we had adopted the more modern fashion of spelling the name.

From Lincoln we went to Lichfield to see the cathedral, which we knew to be small but one of the most beautiful in England. It held special interest for us, since some of the stones in our little church in Connecticut had been brought over from here. Then on to Oxford, Windsor, and Chester Cathedral, which I recommend to everyone going to England, for it has, I think, the finest choir and the most beautiful choir screen to be seen in this world.

We motored through the Lake Country, then down into Wales and Cornwall. For three idyllic months we rattled and bounced from Land's End to Perth, and never saw enough of that incredible island which is a continent in itself. We would put up overnight at some old English inn, where we were always quite comfortable, and would have breakfast there in the morning before starting out. English breakfasts are enormous, and so we would not eat again till late afternoon when it came time for tea. This English high tea was the big event of the day, with its muffins and scones and cakes and biscuits, and its assortment of cheeses and marmalades and jams. There was a fixed price on this feast, and you ate all you wanted—which, in our case, was often so much that I was downright embarrassed.

The tables were turned on us, however, in Scotland. In Edinburgh we found a very tempting tearoom with the most delectable heaps yet of tiny golden cupcakes, sandwiches, Scottish shortbread and scones. "The children" went to town, with some assistance

from me, and we stuffed ourselves till we couldn't hold another mouthful. Then came the bill—it was all à la carte! We could have dined on pheasant, back home, for the price of that tea! Still and all, we had no complaint coming, except that Kathryna was reminded from then on that too many sweets are bad for the teeth.

Before leaving home, I had promised Isabelle and Alec that I would look in on their former employers while we were in Scotland, and deliver some messages. So when we arrived at Ford Castle, we found our way to the rectory and drew up to the door.

A maid answered my summons, and casting an astonished glance at my travel-stained tweeds, told me quickly that the lady of the house was not in, she was afraid. "But we have come from Alec!" I protested, raising my voice just before the door closed in my face. "Alec Aynsley! He is my gardener back home!"

At this magic name, the door flew open wide—and the lady of the house appeared out of nowhere, all welcoming smiles. We were dragged in and fed tea, while we detailed all the latest news of our gardener and cook. Later we were taken into the chapel and shown the splendid pews Alec had made with his hands, for in addition to all his other skills, he was an excellent carpenter.

We returned home in the fall of that year, 1935, just in time to hear of the death of DeWolf Hopper. He had died in Kansas City, at the age of seventy-seven. His body was brought east to the Little Church for burial, and I presided at the service for my old, old friend. There must have been half a thousand people outside, who could not even get in. The Masonic orders alone took up a large part of the church, for DeWolf had been a prominent Mason. I don't know any better tribute to the man's essentially warm and lovable nature than the fact that two of his wives were there in genuine mourning—his third wife and his sixth—and that among the pallbearers were two sons from different marriages, his second and his fifth. They all loved him and honored him, and they consoled one another without the slightest sign of estrangement.

Mollie began once more to have trouble with her health. Her

chest was bothering her again, and several doctors advised her to get out of New York for the winter, so we went to South Carolina. This helped for a while, but as soon as we came back to New York she was poorly again. Finally we decided to send her out to her brother's place at Twenty-Nine Palms, in the desert, and there at last she seemed a lot better. But since I could not remain there, I returned to the rectory alone, and visited her for a week or so at a time when I could get away from work. As time went on, this meant that I saw her only three or four times a year, and that Kathryna saw her only on vacations. The separation was a cruel one, felt deeply by all of us, and it was made bearable only by the hope that the dry heat of the California desert might give Mollie a permanent cure.

And in fact, by the latter part of 1937 she seemed so much better that the doctors sent her home to stay. We had all too brief a time to enjoy our reunion as a family, when trouble struck again. Mrs. Watson was by now in her eighties, and while still very much in possession of her faculties, was becoming a little willful and difficult to manage. I have mentioned her maid Sarah, who had looked after her for years. One day in March 1938, Mrs. Watson took umbrage at something Sarah said or did, and ordered her out of the apartment. Sarah felt the best thing to do was to humor her mistress, and so she left till the cloud should blow over. But sometime during that night, Mrs. Watson fell to the floor in her bedroom and could not get up. No one heard her fall, and it was morning before she was found. By that time she had lain for a number of hours in the icy wind from an open window, and pneumonia had developed. She was rushed to the hospital, but nothing could be done to save her life. She died a day or so later.

This was a crushing blow to Mollie, for there had always been a great bond of love and respect between her and her mother. Mollie's brothers, Colonel Henry Lee Watson and Eugene A. H. Watson, both of Carmel, California, flew east for the services, which were held at St. Matthew's and St. Timothy's on West Eighty-fourth

Street. The funeral was conducted by Dr. Arthur H. Judge, today the oldest living clergyman in the diocese of New York. He had been Mrs. Watson's rector for years, and spoke feelingly of her many charities and interests. She had not only heavily supported St. Luke's Home for Aged Women, but she had been active in the building of the Fifth Avenue Hospital. She maintained two rooms for charity patients at St. Luke's Hospital as well. We buried her up in Kensico before the beautiful stone cross erected for her husband.

Though it was really too much for her, Mollie felt it was her duty to settle her mother's apartment. She went up there day after day, sorting papers and family effects, to help put the estate in order. By the time she was finished, her health had suffered a relapse. She returned to Twenty-Nine Palms, but was so slow to respond that the doctors suggested her going to England to consult certain specialists. Mollie was delighted at this development, for she had long been wanting to take Kathryna to Holland, and felt this offered a dual-purpose trip. I once more took leave of absence—it had been two years since our last tour—and we invited my sister Alice, who had never seen Europe, to come along with us.

Again we put up at the Stafford in London, and Mollie at once began her treatments with the Harley Street specialists. However, in a very short time they sent for me secretly to give their report. Mollie had cancer of the lungs, and there was nothing more that science could do for her, except perhaps to retard the progress of the disease. She might live for months, she might live a year.

The doctors thought it best not to tell her the truth, and yet as time went on, I think Mollie herself began to suspect. At that time, however, she was told nothing except that a stay at Leamington Spa might be good for her general health. She therefore agreed to put off the trip to Holland for another few weeks.

Leamington is a clean and tree-shaded town, famous since Roman times for its medicinal waters. We put up at the Regent Hotel, where Victoria often stayed, and were given tremendous rooms

which were called the Royal Suite. They looked out over a great expanse of gardens, and it was easy for Mollie to get down from there to the mineral springs.

One of the advantages of Leamington was that it lay in the very heart of Warwick, surrounded by history in every direction. Each morning we started out in a hired car with chauffeur and motored either to Sulgrave Manor, ancestral home of the Washingtons, or to ancient Kenilworth, the scene of Scott's famous novel. Mollie loved Scott as I did, and we spent entrancing afternoons roaming about the old halls and gardens of this historic castle, half expecting to meet the ghost of poor Amy Robsart.

The Leamington waters did indeed seem to have a tonic effect on Mollie's vitality, for she was feeling fairly well again. Now we took a long motor trip southward to Eastbourne, and then along the picturesque channel coast of England. When we reached Southampton, we set sail for the Continent and landed at Bruges.

Mollie herself had gained much of her education as a child by traveling, and by living abroad. She had especially loved the Low Countries, and wanted Kathryna to see them. We went to Ypres to visit the battlefields—for in those days people still made pilgrimages to honor the scenes of the First World War—then on to Ghent, where the letters of introduction we had brought from America gained us access to some of the great Flemish convents. Here we watched the nuns, in their quaint old-fashioned headdresses, work on the exquisite lace they have produced for generations. So many of the priceless wedding veils treasured over here, as heirlooms, have been made by these nuns behind their stone walls! Then we went to Brussels to visit the university and cathedral, with again a side trip to see another battlefield—this time Waterloo,

Mollie was deriving so much enjoyment from showing Kathryna the places she herself had always loved, that I had not the heart to protest or interfere. I tried to see that she did not overdo it, however, and frequently persuaded her to stay at the hotel and rest while Florence, or my sister Alice, or I, showed Kathryna around. We all went to Spa, for example, and remained there a week or so

while Mollie took the waters. The rest and treatment seemed to refresh her. But Spa was so close to the German border that every day the place shook with the detonation of cannon—Hitler's troops practicing. It was the summer of 1938, and much, much later than anyone imagined.

When Mollie felt rested, we started up toward Holland. Eventually we came to Amsterdam, where I could not believe my eyes. I thought I had seen bicycles in England and Belgium, but here your car could not proceed more than one foot at a time, so closely packed were the cycles. And the bedlam! It was worse than New York. We checked in at a hotel, and it was apparent that Mollie was beginning to lose strength now in a serious way. The gains she had made at Spa had quickly been dissipated. Still, she insisted on continuing the journey, and I did not see what could be gained from depriving her of this brief remaining pleasure. We proceeded to Haarlem, to visit the Frans Hals museum with its wonderful paintings, then on to Vollendam, so Kathryna could see the quaint native costumes.

I was seriously alarmed for Mollie by the time we reached The Hague. As soon as we checked in at the hotel, I phoned the American Embassy. I did not want to entrust her to a hotel doctor, and I thought our embassy might recommend a physician I could call. The United States consul was not there, however; and at last, in desperation, I phoned the British representative. He could not have been kinder. He put me in touch with Queen Wilhelmina's physician, who came to the hotel at once and ministered to Mollie. But afterward he drew me aside and told me that just as soon as she was able to travel again, we must start toward home. From now on she would lose ground fast, with little recuperation, and we had no time to lose.

The moment Mollie was able to be moved, I booked passage on the *New Amsterdam.* It was the maiden trip of this beautiful liner, and it was solidly packed with doctors and scientists fleeing Hitler's Germany. One very great specialist in cancer came to our cabin every day to see Mollie and make her as comfortable as possible.

There was also a nurse in constant attendance. I had cabled ahead to have an ambulance waiting at the pier when we docked, and we took Mollie directly to the Hotel Seville. The rectory was still closed for the summer, and not in shape to receive us.

The following day Mollie was driven in the ambulance up to Connecticut, and installed in her room at Elm Ridge. In the beginning, Kathryna was brought into the room every day to see her mother, but as Mollie lost weight she felt she did not want the child to witness her decline. The opening of school soon gave us an excuse to keep Kathryna in New York.

In the beginning also, many friends appeared—old acquaintances from Litchfield and even from the city. But there again, as time passed, Mollie preferred not to be put to the strain of talking to people. Two physicians took turns with the daily ministrations now required for her comfort—for her lungs filled constantly with fluids and had to be drained. I was numb with her suffering, and could only ask God to take her quickly and quietly. Her great faith sustained her, for while Mollie never made a show of religion, she believed deeply in God and in the immortality of man.

It was very early on the morning of All Souls' Eve that peace came to Mollie. I had administered the sacraments, and was sitting by her side, when I knew she breathed her last. I got up to stand by the window and there I saw a most beautiful dawn coming up behind the treetops. It seemed Nature's reproach to my agony of spirit—"The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth his handiwork." I felt that Mollie was still there beside me, just as I have so often felt she was beside me in all the years since.

We brought Mollie back to the Little Church for burial, and Bishop Manning conducted the service. Practically all of our parishioners were there, those who had learned to love Mollie for her unfailing graciousness and equanimity of spirit, as well as members of the Hoffman, Watson, and other related families. Kathryna looked so very poised, and so much like her mother! It was when we began to walk out behind the coffin, at the end of the service,

that I nearly broke down. Then I felt a hand steal into mine and give it a tight squeeze. That helped me regain my composure, and also told me that my little Kathryna, a child up to now, had begun to grow up.

CHAPTER XXV

Kathryna's Education—Mary Sloan Colt and Augusta Reese Offer to Help—Death of Courtlandt Nicoll—John Sloane—Edward P. Mellon—Edith Kelley—Mrs. Campbell Clark—Beatrice Cartwright—Betty Watts and Jan Masaryk.

AFTER MOLLIE'S DEATH, I was left with the responsibility of bringing up a daughter. I don't know how I would have managed it had her nurse, Florence Wood, not remained with us. It appeared that somehow, a few days before she died, Mollie had managed to write a note for Florence, in which she asked her not to leave Kathryna; at least, not so long as the child had need of her, not till she grew up. Florence regarded my wife's request as an almost sacred injunction, and has never left us—except for one time, as I shall explain later. Of course, eventually, after Kathryna married, Florence took over the management of the rectory and became my housekeeper. But even today, she will drop everything else if Kathryna or her children have need of her, and I don't know how many times she has packed up and dashed off to wherever they may be, even Europe or California.

Others also came to my rescue. Mary Sloan Colt, for example, mother of Sloan Colt the banker, had served for years as president of the New York Assembly balls. She had been a cousin of Mrs.

Watson's, and felt a natural interest in seeing that Kathryna followed family traditions in being presented to society. Another friend who proved most solicitous was Augusta Reese, wife of Willis Reese, who was one of my vestrymen. The Reeses were related to the Livingston family, and their ancestral home was near Hamburg, New York. There they had their own private chapel, and when they remained in the country for any length of time, Mass was usually said there by some father from the Holy Cross Order near Poughkeepsie. They raised beautiful flowers in their gardens and greenhouses, and when they came back to their town house at Thirty-fourth and Park, they usually brought mountains of blossoms for the Little Church altar. In fact, it was while they were driving down the parkway with a load of such flowers, just the day before Palm Sunday a few years ago, that their car became involved in a terrible accident, and Willis was killed. His death was instantaneous, but his wife was rushed to the hospital where she was given emergency treatment.

As soon as we received word of the tragedy, I hurried up to Westchester to volunteer my services. Augusta Reese recovered, and when she was well enough she assumed the administration of the estate and all her business affairs. She had no other help than a secretary, yet she showed the most astonishing ability at management, never for a moment losing her lightness and feminine charm.

Augusta Reese had a son, Willis L. M. Reese, whom she loved very much; but also she had always longed for a daughter. Shortly after Mollie's death, she said to me, "You know, Dr. Ray, I would like to do for Kathryna what I would have done for a daughter of my own. Now, Mary Colt and I between the two of us know almost everyone to know in New York. If it's all right with you, I propose to sponsor her and see that she takes her place in society." I could not object, for I knew that that was what Mollie would have wanted; and so Kathryna's social career passed into experienced and competent hands.

I have spoken of Ione Nicoll, who played so active a part in the fight for Repeal, along with Mrs. Sabin. Her husband, Courtlandt

Nicoll, died suddenly a few weeks after Mollie, and in him we lost another of our ablest vestrymen. Descended from Sir Richard Nicoll, British governor of the colony in 1664, he had had a lifelong interest in politics and had been a member of the state senate, and an alderman of the city. He had also served as president of the Museum of the City of New York.

The Nicolls had two daughters, Mildred and Eileen, and since Eileen was just about Kathryna's age, the two had become playmates in childhood and were very close friends. There were also two sons, Courtlandt, Jr., and Benjamin, but the boys were somewhat older. While Mollie lived, we all three went frequently to visit the Nicolls at their home in Southampton; and in fact, to this day, I go there once a year to preach at the little Church on the Dunes.

Courtlandt Nicoll's sister had married John Sloane, head of the furniture house of W. & J. Sloane, and after Courtlandt's death, John Sloane took over his duties as head of the Museum of the City of New York. He was also very active in the English-Speaking Union and any number of other movements. He and his wife had a great house up in the Nineties, and even after his wife's death, he continued to inhabit its vastness all by himself. Kathryna and I went up there rather often to help keep him company. Frankly, I was very happy when he married again, for I thought he seemed lonely.

Another friend of these years was Edward P. Mellon, a nephew of Andrew Mellon, who had married Ione Nicoll's cousin. Ed Mellon lost his wife only a few weeks after I lost Mollie, and in much the same fashion. She too had been operated on like Mollie, and was touring Europe with Ed and her daughters when she was stricken fatally ill at a spa in Germany. They hurried her home only in time for her death; and somehow this tragic experience we both shared in common drew us closer together. I used to go down to Ed Mellon's place near Wilmington, Delaware, every spring after Easter, and we would do as we pleased, like two country gentlemen. Ed had a magnificent farm he had bought, where he raised fancy poultry and ducks. He had a deep-freeze full of the surplus, which

he would send to his friends. All the week I was there, we would visit around the countryside, making a tour of the most fabulous homes—for all of Wilmington is owned by the du Ponts, and people outdo themselves in collecting antiques. I am sure that some of those interiors could not be equaled anywhere, unless possibly at Williamsburg, or in the American Wing of the Metropolitan Museum.

Ed's oldest daughter, Mary, had married Henry Wise, a cousin of Byrd Wise. Like all of his family, he had gone in for the law, and had built up one of the biggest practices in Delaware. He and Mary lived nearby, on a beautiful estate—the only drawback being the Western tick which had been brought in on cattle and which lived in the grasses. Every time you came in from a walk in the fields you had to take a bath and examine yourself all over for any of these ticks. If you missed, the tick would burrow under the skin and cause tick fever.

Ed himself caught the fever eventually. It killed him, in fact; for though he seemed to recover, it was for only a short time. I was attending a dinner party at a home here in New York when I was summoned to the phone for a long-distance call. It was Mary Wise, from Delaware, calling to tell me her father was dead. "He left word," she said, "that you were to conduct the service here at the church. Then he will be taken back to Southampton to lie beside Mother."

I went home to the rectory just long enough to pack an overnight bag, then took the train to Wilmington. I was met at the station by Ed's other daughter, Jane, and her husband, Craigh Leonard. I spent the night at their house, and the next day I went to the farmhouse where Ed and I had spent so many happy Easter vacations, and knelt there to pray. Henry Wise was with me, and neither of us could say much because of emotion. In fact, the first hyacinths each year, and the first Easter lilies, still bring to my mind the thought, "I'll soon be seeing Ed"—and then I remember.

It was at Jane Mellon's wedding reception that I first met another dear friend, Edith Kelley. Edith was very spirited and forth-

right. Every so often she would call me up at the last minute and say, "I'm having a few people to dinner tonight—would you mind filling in?" I never minded in the least, for her dinner parties were sparkling affairs, with the most fascinating people.

For example, I first met Mrs. Stanley Rinehart—Mary Roberts Rinehart—at one of Edith's dinners, and discovered that she told a story across the table even more entertainingly than in the pages of her books. I remember the Bishop of Albany, an adroit conversationalist, who had just returned from a cruise to Australia. He and his wife had been involved in a shipwreck and had nearly lost their lives, and naturally he could hardly wait to tell us the story. But Mrs. Rinehart had also had a recent adventure—a butler of hers had run berserk and tried to kill her with a knife. She began to narrate this tale to the whole table full of people, with such mastery of detail and such artful suspense that the poor Bishop never managed to get in a word. I was reminded of the time Cornelia Otis Skinner and Michael Strange were both guests at the same party. Both were brilliant talkers, both were accustomed to the center of the stage. Michael Strange, of course, was John Barrymore's wife and the mother of Diana. She was also a strikingly beautiful woman, dark and exotic. She managed at the start to get everyone's attention, and never stopped talking. It was the only time I ever saw Cornelia Otis Skinner outdone, and it ended with her getting her things and leaving the party. That is a lesson hostesses should never forget—that one "life of the party" is always enough. Two can be its death.

In the summers, Edith Kelley used to go to a quiet little beach up in Maine where she could bathe undisturbed. Mary Roberts Rinehart had a big summer house not far away, and she was kind enough to invite me there to join in family parties. Here again I listened to her tales by the fire, and realized what a natural-born storyteller this gifted woman was. When a storm was brewing, or the logs were burning low, she would tell of the ghostly happenings in her Washington apartment after Boies Penrose died. I swear the ice water would run down your spine! I don't think for a moment

she believed in ghosts or spirits, for she is a very level-headed and sensible woman. But she knew they were always sure-fire to capture an audience.

Edith Kelley belonged to St. Bartholomew's—at least she had a pew there. But she rarely went to service because, she said, she thought the sermons were stuffy. She didn't come to service here either, or at least not very often, but she did come to lunch. I felt very much honored, and Isabelle would always outdo herself in her cooking on those days. During the last year of Edith's life she was really too ill to go much of anywhere, yet she had lunch with me at the rectory just three days before she died. She came in so breezy and exuberant that I thought, "Oh, good—she must be recovered." But Florence Wood, who had more intuition, knew something was wrong. She came to me later and said, "You know, Dr. Ray, if I hadn't known Mrs. Kelley never touches liquor, not even wine, I'd have thought she was intoxicated!" Poor Edith—she was mortally ill, and none of us knew it. The next day a policeman found her wandering about quite helpless, and took her back home. The day after, she was dead.

As soon as I heard the news, I hurried to her house. We found that she had made plans for her funeral some time before, and had specified that the service was to be held at St. Bartholomew's, and I was to officiate! This was a bit awkward, since the rector had already proceeded with his plans. "You go ahead," I said, "but let me have the committal, the final service at the grave. She was a personal friend."

Edith had been active in war work in 1917, and in the Second World War she had been prominent in the women's division of the Navy. She had been decorated many times by the government, received many honors. Now scores of people she had known in both the Army and the Navy came to her funeral, as well as policemen, social workers, and the assorted masses of people she had known in all walks of life. The place was so crowded that the casket had to be moved out of the chapel and into the church. Then the rector, who had never known Edith well, got up and began to deliver a

eulogy. He spoke of the deceased as a "very devout woman," and I thought, "Oh, dear Edith, you must be turning in that coffin!" This is the trouble, in my opinion, with eulogies—only too often they are delivered by men who did not know the deceased, or not well enough. They praise all the wrong things, and leave unsaid the things worthy of mention. Besides, it always seems to me a little presumptuous to try to sum up another person's life, as though reviewing a book. The burial service itself, as in the Book of Common Prayer, says all that is necessary—and polished by the centuries into more beautiful words than most of us preachers are able to command.

Another hostess who brightened my days with invitations was Mrs. Campbell Clark. Her husband had been head of the Campbell Clark Thread Company, and had left her with two daughters and a considerable fortune. She was a striking-looking woman; not beautiful ever, but a woman you would notice. For some reason I never quite discovered, she was partial to the company of doctors. She didn't like women, at least she didn't like their "chatter" at dinnertime, and so her table would consist of herself, myself, and a dozen assorted medicos. Dr. Joseph Collins, who wrote *The Doctor Looks at Literature* and several other bestsellers, tried for years to get Mrs. Campbell to marry him. He was truly devoted. But she had no desire, she said, to marry again. They remained friends, however; and when Dr. Collins died he left his apartment, which he owned, to Mrs. Campbell's daughter, Phil Duane, who is still living in it. I see her often, for she and her husband come down here to church.

Mrs. Campbell Clark had a vigorous mind. She managed all her own affairs, and was a most self-possessed woman—except for one crotchet. Her dislike of Franklin D. Roosevelt became such an obsession that the very sound of his name would send her off into tirades. This became so acute that we were all afraid she might break a blood vessel or suffer a stroke, and so we reached a tacit agreement never to mention "that man's" name in her presence.

Then there was Beatrice Cartwright, at whose home I was often a guest. Her parties were jollier than most and somewhat Bohe-

mian. She had been one of the rich Benjamins before her marriage, and she had never known what it was not to be prodigal in giving to friends. The result was that she was constantly surrounded by eager hangers-on whom she practically supported. Many were "working in the arts"—dancers, painters, musicians—and she helped them out by paying their rent and grocery bills. Often she piled them all onto a liner and sailed them off for a cruise.

It was at one of Beatrice Cartwright's parties that I met Betty Watts, who became one of my friends and who has remained so ever since. Betty, who had been married twice, had lived for years in Paris, where she had cut quite a swath as a woman of fashion and an international beauty. Then she met Jan Masaryk, who was living outside of Czechoslovakia during the war and representing its government-in-exile. I met Masaryk at Beatrice Cartwright's house—he was a tall, handsome man who was quite at home over here, since his mother had been American. This was the dinner at which he and Betty announced their engagement, and it was understood that he would return to Czechoslovakia—it was after peace was declared—and Betty would join him soon after and be married. But as all the world knows, Masaryk fell, or was thrown, from a window shortly after his return. Betty was heartbroken, and has never married since. In recent years, she has made a place for herself on the stage, and earns a living in stock or appearing in television.

One day last fall, Betty called me up and told me Beatrice Cartwright was leaving for Europe. Her health had been failing, and she had expressed a wish to see me before she sailed. This is one of those occasions when vestrymen look at a rector expectantly. A wealthy woman, a benefactress, and one who had often shown a generous disposition in regard to our church. Mrs. Cartwright had always shown special interest in the choir boys, for she herself had a son in England of about that age, and she would invite them to her house for parties, or pay their expenses in summer at camp.

But as soon as I got to Beatrice Cartwright's apartment—she has a full floor on upper Fifth Avenue—her companion met me and drew me aside. "Mrs. Cartwright is terribly depressed, Dr. Ray,"

she cautioned me, "so please don't say anything to remind her of death. Just be happy and gay, and talk of the things she has enjoyed in the past."

So I sat down and prattled of the dinners we had attended over the years, and all the amusing things that had happened, and presently we were both feeling better. The next day she set sail with her usual coterie, half a boatload of people, and she is still on the Riviera. May she live forever, and enjoy every day!

CHAPTER XXVI

Off to Canada—The Rockies and Alaska—Innocents in Hollywood—Louella Parsons—Premiere of The Women—*Kathryna Becomes Cinderella—England Declares War on Hitler—We Pray for Peace—Alma Clayburgh—Charles Manney.*

IN THE SUMMER OF 1939 I decided that Kathryna and I should take a trip somewhere. We studied maps together and worked out a route that would take us up to Montreal, across continental Canada, on up to Alaska, and then back down to California, and so across country home.

I had not been to Montreal for a number of years, and I enjoyed seeing everything anew through Kathryna's eyes. Then we got aboard the Canadian Pacific and had a very comfortable compartment all the way out to Alberta. When the train stopped for any length of time, Kathryna would get out her camera, and we would descend to the platform and take a look around. She had graduated by now from collecting picture postcards, to taking her own snapshots, and this added a great deal of zest to her trip. I have before me the very fat albums she put together after she got home. They are labeled *12,000 Miles by Camera,* and I would guess she has a picture here for every dozen miles.

I took her to Banff and Lake Louise, where her mother and I

had stayed on our honeymoon. Then to Vancouver, where we transferred to the steamship *Prince Robert* of the Canadian National Steamship Line, and sailed up the "inside coast" to Juneau and Alaska. Americans by and large underrate Alaska, and I was no exception. I had had no idea it would be so fascinating. In Juneau we entered the Nugget Shop and bought "real gold nuggets" to bring back home. And in Sitka we marveled at the workmanship of the towering totems that spread their arms against the sky, and I explored old St. Michael's Cathedral, built by the Russians and bearing the stamp of the Greek Orthodox style. Then we edged up past Tattoo Glacier, and fjords as wild as any in Norway, and slipped into Skagway. It was there that we acquired a guide for a while—an old German who had come to Skagway, so he said, in the days of the Gold Rush. Only he did not come as a sourdough, but merely as an undertaker. I asked him where he had learned that trade, and he gave me a shrug. "All you need to be an undertaker," he asserted, "is a little common sense." I asked Victor Shankey about this when I got back, and he said it may be so—in the Arctic. Anyway, this cherubic old guide of ours had cheeks as red as candy-apples, and a grenadier's mustache ten inches across. His tales, I suspect, were as tall as his prices, but he really entertained us and was worth every cent.

What surprised us most was to find so much of the old Russian influence remaining in architecture and place-names. Of course, when you get to the westernmost tip, you are only a few miles from Siberia and you can almost see across the intervening strait. All in all, I think this trip to Alaska was one of the most rewarding tours I have ever undertaken, and I strongly recommend it to my fellow-Americans. It is exciting, it is different, and it is fully as beautiful as many of the more frequented vacation spots in Europe.

On our way back down the coast, we stopped at Victoria, that lovely Canadian city at the tip of Vancouver Island. Mollie and I had fallen so completely in love with Victoria when we had seen it on our honeymoon that we seriously talked of coming back there to live in our old age, after I had retired. Kathryna and I put up at

the Empress Hotel, and the Governor-General was good enough to invite us to luncheon. We met many people, most of them English, for Victoria is filled with officers' widows, and the retired personnel of Army and Navy. This gives the whole town a rather proper atmosphere—orderly, spotless, and perhaps a little slow by American standards. But it is also very relaxing.

After Victoria, we moved down the coast—Seattle, San Francisco, then to Monterey. Mollie's brothers lived in Carmel, overlooking that incomparable bay where the mountains come marching right down to the sea, and the sun sets in Asia. We visited with them a few days, making trips out into the desert, and motoring around to the old Spanish missions.

We made a detour after leaving Carmel, and crossed over to Arizona to see the Grand Canyon. There we engaged an Indian guide, attended Indian dances, and made the famous donkey ride down the sides of the canyon. Kathryna took rolls and rolls of pictures here—but of course, no picture can capture the sheer immensity and grandeur of that scene. The sight of it, I should think, would shake the most skeptical, if he did not believe in God.

Kathryna, however, was eager to get back to California—I had promised her a treat, a few days in Hollywood, and she had reacted to this like any other teen-age girl. I knew Louella Parsons, whom I had met on one of her trips to New York, and after we had registered in what turned out to be a very good suite in a very nice hotel, I gave her a ring. As luck would have it, the movie version of Clare Boothe's *The Women* was opening the next night at Grauman's Chinese, with its all-woman cast of glamorous stars—Joan Crawford, Norma Shearer, Rosalind Russell, Paulette Goddard, Joan Fontaine, Ruth Hussey, and others. This brilliant roster was thrilling to Kathryna; but of more interest to me was that my old friend Lucille Watson, a member of our Guild, played a character part.

The next afternoon, Louella Parsons invited us out to San Simeon, that baronial estate of William Randolph Hearst's, where even the trees and rocks concealed outdoor telephones. Then she asked us if we would care to come to the premiere. Her husband,

Dr. Martin, and her daughter, Harriet Parsons, would pick us up at our hotel; then, after the showing of *The Women*, we would attend a party she was giving at Romanoff's.

Our first reaction was undiluted enthusiasm. Then Kathryna, as soon as she had recovered from her initial surprise, began to bewail the fact that she had nothing to wear! I was amused—she was only fifteen—until I realized her complaint was legitimate. She had started out with a limited wardrobe, mostly sweaters and skirts, and even these had seen pretty hard wear. But Howard Shoop overheard her complaint; he was then one of Hollywood's youngest designers, and we had known him since our summer in Martha's Vineyard. Howard told Kathryna to go back to the hotel and get ready for the party, and not worry about the clothes—he would see that she got them.

We went back to the hotel. Kathryna took a shower, fixed her hair, and got ready. Then, just as in any version of a Cinderella movie, the boxes and bundles began to arrive. There was a beautiful white dress of gossamer tulle, all filmy and swirling. There were slippers to match. There was a small fox cape for the shoulders, trimmed with tails of ermine. And an orchid corsage. Finally, when Howard arrived to view his handiwork and see how Kathryna looked, he brought with him a box containing two diamond earrings! All this finery, of course, had to go back to the studio wardrobe the very next day, but meantime no starlet could ever have been more beautiful in them than our ecstatic Kathryna. She twirled before the mirror and kissed us both repeatedly in flurries of delight.

I remember all this vividly, but very little about the premiere or the party that followed. This is because, while we were all sitting at Romanoff's, with Bob Sherwood across the table from me, someone came dashing in from outside and announced in a terrible voice that war was declared! Hitler had marched into Poland, and England had declared war. A hush like doomsday fell over the whole company, then some of the English actors rose and left to arrange immediately for their passage back home. A few elected to stay on in Hollywood, but have never felt welcome to return to their home-

land since. Kathryna and I went back to our hotel in a much more chastened mood than when we had left it, and the next day, after returning the clothes to Howard, we started back to New York. Kathryna returned to her studies at Chapin's, while I immersed myself in my work at the church. But we had not been back long before Kathryna came to me one morning with a note in her hand. Her beloved nurse, Florence Wood, had decamped in the middle of the night! She had not had the heart to say good-by to us, she wrote, but her country was in desperate need of every pair of hands it could get, and she was going back to help make munitions. And so, for the remainder of the war, we sent packages to Florence, prayed for her welfare, and looked forward to the time when she should return. This was the only time Florence ever left us.

It had been earlier in this year, 1939, that the Pope had called upon all Christendom to pray for world peace. Lent was to be celebrated with forty days of meditation, fasting, and prayer. Although we bore no allegiance to the head of the Roman church, I had called upon our parishioners to join in so high and holy a cause. The Right Rev. Henry St. George Tucker, Presiding Bishop of all Episcopal churches in America, had just become honorary president of our Actors' Guild, and he was heartily in favor of this world-wide movement. I remember calling upon our congregation to "accept the leadership of Pope Pius XII in this drive for world peace. We must believe in the power of moral reorganization. Catholics, Protestants, and Anglicans all can unite under the great banner of prayer and work for peace." The result was that our church—as did many other churches everywhere—responded most enthusiastically; and for forty days all manner of people, of all faiths and creeds, came in off the street and got down on their knees and prayed for world peace.

Of course, quite a number of well-meaning people had been taken in by Hitler—not only in England, but over here as well. Poor Alma Clayburgh! She wouldn't hurt a fly, yet before Hitler showed up in his true colors, she thought he was wonderful. When she had been

in Berlin in the early 1930s, she had been invited to his parties attended by many of the international set, and she had been impressed by his love for music and the opera. Alma herself, of course, had been a Metropolitan diva in her earlier days, and she thought it splendid that Hitler was so appreciative of Wagner. When it finally came out that he was appreciative of other things, too—such as night marches and sudden invasion—she had to explain, with a rather red face, that this was a side of her host she had not previously seen.

I have known Alma since 1931, when she came down here to sing *Ave Maria* at Clara Morris' funeral. She had an enormous acquaintance in theatrical circles, and earned a very good living tutoring and coaching young people for the stage. No one could equal her at planning a party, and eventually she turned her talents in that direction professionally, and became another Elsa Maxwell. In size, at least, she surpasses Elsa Maxwell—for if I am any judge, Alma must tip the scales at nearly three hundred. It may not be chivalrous to draw attention to a lady's weight, but I must in this instance, for it leads to a story..

When Queen Wilhelmina came over to this country, Alma asked me to go with her to a big reception to be held at the Metropolitan Museum. I called at her hotel—she is provided with an enormous suite at the Ambassador—and Alma told me that we were expected, before dinner, at Jo Davidson's for cocktails. So we went over to Jo Davidson's studio in the old Beaux Arts building, and were greeted with one of his excellent Martinis. Davidson had just come back after living for years in France, and he described to us how, when Paris was threatened with bombing, the French government sent men to pack up all his statues and casts and ship them to a place of safekeeping in the southern part of France. What other country, he wondered, would give so much care to an artist's lifework? As a matter of fact, I believe when the war was over, he went back and found all his statues intact.

After our cocktail, we went to the Stork Club where Alma had ordered an excellent meal. We were halfway through it when one

of the waiters came bustling in and exclaimed, "Madame Clayburgh, a very bad storm is coming up. You had better start now if you want to get to the museum—it will be hard to find a taxi." But Alma refused to hurry her meal. When at last we were finished and got out on the sidewalk, the streets were dancing with rain and there was not a cab in sight. Alma still was unperturbed. She simply pulled a police whistle out of her bag, gave a mighty blast on it, and soon a cab came hurtling around the corner. She never, she told me, went out without this whistle, considering it standard equipment for life in New York!

We arrived late at the museum, and had to take seats at the back of the auditorium. But afterward there was to be a private reception for the Queen on the second floor; and so, as soon as the ceremonies were concluded, we hurried out into the lobby and started up the stairs. But Alma, with all her weight, is somewhat arthritic. She got as far as the mezzanine, then gasped to me, "I can go no farther!" and sank down on a bench. This soon resulted in a completely impromptu and rival reception—for everyone who saw Alma cried out, "Madame Clayburgh!" and crowded around her. By the time she decided to move on, the Queen's reception was quite over and finished; and anyway, Alma suddenly remembered she was leaving for Andover in the morning, hoping to arrive in time for the birth of her latest grandchild. She pulled the police whistle out of her purse and said, "Jack"—she always called me Jack, for Jackson—"go down and hail a cab. I'll meet you at the curb."

So there I stood, in the rain, outside the Metropolitan Museum, a clergyman in a turned-around collar tootling on a police whistle till a taxi showed up. By that time Alma was emerging through the doors, completely out of breath, and the driver and I helped her down the flight of steps and into the cab. Again, at her hotel, he had to get out and help me get her into the lobby. I asked him to wait for me, while I took Alma upstairs; and he was there, lounging behind his wheel, when I came down again.

As I climbed into the back seat, he turned and gave me a long,

searching look. "Padre," he said, "some day that girl-friend of yours will drop on your hands!" And with a shake of the head, he pulled away from the curb.

While Mollie was living, we often invited Alma to dinner, along with our mutual friend, Charles Manney. Charles, brother of Helen Westley, the actress, was a gifted musician and a superlative story-teller. He and Alma would play their own private version of *Can You Top This*? all evening long, and the entertainment was priceless. The best part about Alma was that she never seemed to mind if the laugh was on her, and one of her funniest stories was about the time she persuaded William Beebe to take her down in his bathysphere. With her extra ballast, they had no trouble in sinking to the bottom of the ocean—the crucial question was, would they ever get up?

CHAPTER XXVII

Venezuela—Bermuda—William Beebe's Undersea Laboratory—Visit to Murray Bay—Death of Ione Nicoll—War Brides—I Write a Book on War Brides' Problems—Kathryna Makes Her Debut—My Daughter Becomes a War Bride—I Go to the Wentworth Hotel in Portsmouth—I Discover New Friends.

THE FOLLOWING SUMMER Kathryna and I decided on a trip to Venezuela. This time we took along with us Kathryna's schoolmate and friend, Frances Stoddard, daughter of Colonel Francis Stoddard. We booked passage on a Grace Line boat, the *Santa Paula,* and the first day out made the acquaintance of Father Smith, a young Roman priest who was no more in clerical garb than I was. He joined us enthusiastically in all the shipboard games, was an excellent sport, and turned out to be our inseparable companion.

Our first stop was Bermuda, where we remained a few days and where a New York press photographer caught us lolling on the sands. He sent the picture back home, and the next thing, there was I in the *Herald-Tribune,* lounging around with two pretty young girls, and me in white flannels! A little undignified, and I could only hope my parishioners would recognize one of the bathing beauties as my daughter. From there we sailed to Caracas, where some American friends had offered us accommodations in their

old Spanish house. At first glimpse it seemed like nothing but a solid stone wall built flush upon the street. But when the heavy wooden gates swung inward, a beautiful courtyard was revealed inside, like a secret oasis, and we were led to our quarters.

The cost of living, we soon found out, was sky-high in Caracas. A nickel Hershey bar cost thirty cents, a bar of soap eighty. The poor people were poorer than any I had ever seen anywhere, even in Mexico, and the rich were making fortunes in oil. But the Andes were awe-inspiring, and the countryside beautiful. We made many trips with a native driver who was even more contemptuous of death than our chauffeur in Italy. Everywhere along the roads, and especially at the curves, we saw white wooden crosses; and when we asked our guide what these crosses signified, he answered nonchalantly that they all stood for accidents—fatal accidents, where motorists were killed. If such grim reminders were supposed to promote safer driving, for all we could see they signally failed.

The old dictator, Gomez, had not been dead long, and his name kept popping up in all conversations. He had never been married, they said, but openly boasted that he had between eighty and ninety children. Of course, these had been born of various mothers, but toward the end of his life there was one woman who became more or less recognized as his common-law wife. Actually, on his deathbed, Gomez sent for a priest and had this union confirmed. We drove out to take a look at his famous estate, Maracay, and though it was falling into ruins, it still had the appearance of a robber baron's stronghold.

After our stay at Caracas we returned to Bermuda, and put up at the Elbow Beach Hotel, which I think is one of the most attractive on the island, and which is run by Americans. At that time no cars were allowed, and there were no streetcars or traffic. This made it wondrously quiet, but caused great inconvenience in getting from place to place. The horse-drawn, antiquated carriages were fine for short distances; but most parties were given at houses far from the hotel, and the drive was expensive. You might accept an invita-

tion to dinner, for example, and find that your fare was ten or fifteen dollars.

There were many British aircraft stationed on the island, and dashing airmen were always flying low over the beach, or turning up in uniform at dances. Also, to the delight of my two young protégées, young Johnny Wanamaker and his bride were there on their honeymoon. They all went whizzing about on bicycles, seeing the sights, visiting, and browsing through the shops.

I, on the other hand, went to see my old friend, William Beebe, in his part of the island. He had a six-acre estate there, which he had purchased from the British government, and which he called Nonsuch. It was here that he had built the undersea laboratory described in his books; and I spent fascinating hours with him being shown all around, and going down in the bathysphere. There I watched the comings and goings of the creatures which live in the curious world of the coral reef, and saw the small forests of submarine trees. It was much like being in a holy cathedral, and I am grateful for the experience as having brought me that much closer to the creations of God.

Late in the afternoon we returned to the house for a long, delightful chat with Beebe's wife, Elswyth Thane, and for one of their excellent dinners. Beebe is a gourmet who pays little attention to breakfast or lunch, but who likes to sit and talk for hours over an endless dinner. He smokes very little, and the cigarettes he does smoke are made especially for him and are pleasantly mild. For the last two or three years, Beebe has not been north very much; but until that time, he and his wife were annual guests at my house at Christmas. I always looked forward to their intelligent talk and amiable company, and my Christmas dinners hardly seem the same without them.

Another trip Kathryna and I made with Frances Stoddard was up to Quebec. Quite a few Americans had taken over some of the old French manor houses at Murray Bay, just across the river, and among them were friends of ours from New York and Philadelphia.

Young Willis Reese was there with his wife, for she was the granddaughter of old General Oliver, who had bought many acres along the waterfront before this lovely spot became popular. We first accepted the invitation of Mrs. Henderson Robb to stay a few days at her house, where she more than kept her promise to introduce Kathryna and Frances to all the young bachelors. Then we moved on to the Canadian Pacific Hotel, where we shared the terrace with Secretary Morgenthau and his family, and Lady Jane Williams-Taylor. Lady Jane was the fashionable wife of Montreal's leading banker, and a very blithe spirit. She loved to shock "the natives," as she called them, though she was invariably gracious to me, and I attended several of her parties without being given the least cause for offense. I later knew her daughter, Brenda Frazier—who, in turn, was the mother of that beautiful little Brenda Frazier who became the toast of café society and married "Shipwreck" Kelly. All three were women of very striking beauty, but so unconventional that they seemed driven by the need to upset the applecart.

I had not been back in New York very long, after this trip to Quebec, before a tragedy happened. Our old friend, Ione Nicoll, had been very depressed since the loss of her husband, and I had urged her to take a Caribbean cruise and get a change of scene. She had refused, saying she couldn't be spared from the social work she was doing. Worse still, she had gone on some kind of diet that had made her lose much too drastically, and she wound up in the hospital. I was up at Elm Ridge one day when Ione phoned me from her hospital room, and asked me if I could come down to New York to see her at once. She simply had to talk to me. She sounded so distraught that I promised her I would get the next train, and drove to the station. But when the train pulled into Grand Central, possibly some three or four hours after she had phoned me, the evening papers were already out. Their big, black headlines gave me a terrible shock—MRS. COURTLANDT NICOLL DEAD IN HOSPITAL LEAP. I rushed to the hospital, but of course it was all over.

It has never been established whether Ione Nicoll jumped out the

window, or whether she leaned out for air and got dizzy and fell. It was true that she sounded extremely upset on the phone, but I would never have guessed that she contemplated anything so desperate. This was a loss that Kathryna and I felt deeply, for Eileen Nicoll, Ione's younger daughter, was a close friend of my daughter's, and before Courtlandt's death, we all had spent many holidays at the Nicolls' summer home.

Ione had onetime told me, "I always send flowers anyway, even when the funeral notice says not to do it." She said that was the only way, in time of death, that one could express sympathy and true understanding. I suspect her policy was appreciated in a good many quarters, for never have I seen so many flowers as at her funeral. They arrived by the hundreds, and there were so many of them that when we started out with her for Southampton, where her husband was buried, we had to leave half of them behind.

By now Kathryna was getting old enough to think of a career. She had inherited Mollie's natural flair for wearing clothes well, and she had very good taste. When she told me she thought she would like to study design after Chapin's, instead of going to college, I approved of the idea; so, when the time came, she registered at Parsons School of Design. American designers were just beginning to gain recognition. Peggy Hoyt, for example, had built up a thirty-million-dollar business in the old Philip Rhinelander mansion on East Fifty-fifth Street, and when her models paraded down the Francis I staircase, they said all society was there to have a look, and that there was something to see. It was a pity that untimely death cut short her career—we buried her here from the Little Church. Her name will be remembered as the first of American women designers, and I understand that her sketch books will be preserved by the New York Public Library after the death of her husband, Aubrey D. Edes.

Kathryna was nineteen when she finished at Parsons, and since the United States too was now in the war, she worked all summer in the Interceptor Command. It took me back twenty-five years to the time when I had courted her mother, and Mollie had bivouacked

out at an Army camp in Washington. It seemed that the "manpower" of war was hitting each generation—first the mother in uniform, and this time the daughter!

I had other reminders too that history was repeating itself. Once again the war brides and their soldiers were flocking to the rectory, wanting to be married as quickly as they could. We stuck to our rules—parents' consent required, no runaways or elopements. Still, we saw our quota of troubles. Between 1940 and 1942, the birth rate in this country jumped fifteen per cent. Men going overseas, perhaps never to return, wanted to see sons of their own before saying good-by. Or the wife wanted to keep something of her husband in the image of his child. Or the young bride—often much too young—was ignorant of any sort of birth-control measures. Or, in some cases, there was the hope that children might mean deferment from the draft. Whatever the motive, we were almost as busy at the baptismal font as at the marriage altar.

I remember one young bride who had been married only a few months after Pearl Harbor. Two weeks after the ceremony her husband had been shipped overseas—now she was alone in New York, and found she was going to have a baby. The only thing she could do was to go back to her family, and this was going to be difficult from every point of view—physiological, psychological, and financial. The girl was still too young and immature to raise a child by herself; and her parents, who had already made many sacrifices to raise one family, were none too eager to start in again. The girl was in tears. "But we were so much in love," she sobbed. "I thought it would be wonderful to have his baby—I just didn't *think*!"

This was early in the war. I was to hear the same story, in all its variations, many, many times over. Finally I wrote an article for *The Atlantic Monthly*, called "For Better or Worse," in which I tried to sound a few warnings. And later, feeling the need for a greater circulation, I wrote a guidebook for war brides entitled *Marriage Is a Serious Business*. Most of those who came to us to be married throughout the war years read this book before they took their vows, and some brides told me they read it over and over.

I hope it did a little good, for before the war was finished, we performed between two and three thousand of these hurry-up marriages.

Kathryna made her debut in society that fall, at the New York Assembly Ball; and later she and Judy Fiske, niece of Mrs. Frederick W. Longfellow, had a coming-out party together at the Ritz-Carlton. Mary Colt and Augusta Reese were her sponsors and made all the arrangements. Kathryna had Mollie's dark hair and slenderness; she was a beautiful girl.

Naturally, she was much in demand. Everywhere one went, to parties or dances, there were young men in uniform; and one of these young men whom Kathryna encountered at some function was young "Courtie" Nicoll. He was the son of Ione and Courtlandt Nicoll, now both dead, and Kathryna had known his family all her life, especially his younger sister, Eileen. But she had not seen much of Courtie, for he was ten years older than either she or Eileen, and had usually been away from home, at some school. Now he was in the air corps, very handsome in his uniform, and he fell in love with Kathryna at sight. She returned his emotion—and so almost before I knew it, I had another wartime wedding on my hands, this time my daughter's.

It is true I tried to dissuade her from an immediate marriage, I tried to get her to wait. I had nothing against the son of my old vestryman and my good friend Ione. On the contrary, I had long esteemed his family, and valued the friendship of his uncle, John Sloane. But I had always tried to persuade young couples to wait until they had known each other two years, at least, before getting married; and I felt the few times Kathryna and Courtlandt, Jr., had met were not sufficient for a true understanding. But I got no further with my daughter in my arguments than I did with the other war brides who flocked to my rectory.

So like many another parent, I made a virtue of necessity and gave them my blessing. Courtie was stationed near Montgomery, Alabama, and we had Randolph connections in that town. Kathryna

went down there for a few weeks' visit with her relatives, and meantime she planned an early spring wedding. "Even if it falls in Lent," she declared, "I want to be married this spring!"

So, again with the help of Mary Colt and Augusta Reese, arrangements were made and invitations sent out. There were twelve bridesmaids, including Eileen Nicoll, Frances Stoddard, and Nancy Milbank. Nancy's mother was almost in tears. "I could really weep!" she told me. "I wanted Kathryna for *my* daughter-in-law—I always hoped she would marry my Jerry!" But of course Kathryna had practically grown up with Jerry and Nancy Milbank, and childhood companions, as a rule, lack the necessary glamour.

Judy Fiske was maid of honor at the wedding. Kathryna wore the Hoffman wedding veil, in which her mother had been married, and I think she was almost the loveliest bride I have ever beheld, outside of Ann Harding. The church was redolent with flowers, and Bishop Manning came down to perform the marriage ceremony. I gave the bride away, as anxious and proud as the bride's father always is; and afterward there was a tremendous reception at Sherry's. Guests were present from all over the country, and wedding presents arrived by the hundred.

It was Alma Clayburgh who had had the thoughtfulness and foresight to call me up a few days before and say, "Now see here, Jack, you'll be lonely as a hoot owl when Kathryna leaves home. So just as soon as the reception is over, you come along to the theater and we'll have a fine evening." So that is what we did just as soon as the limousine drove away; and it is for this sort of kindness and projection that I honor Alma Clayburgh.

After a very brief honeymoon, Courtlandt had to return to his post. Kathryna insisted on going with him and taking quarters as near the camp as she could. I was sorry to see her do it, for I had tried to discourage my war brides from this sort of thing. Nevertheless, for the next two years Kathryna followed Courtlandt wherever he was sent, their last and longest stay being near El Paso, Texas. She wrote to me frequently, but never had the opportunity to come home for a visit.

I missed her sorely at first, then had to make my readjustment. I rented the house at Elm Ridge, for it was too large and too distant for one person to use. At last one day, when the time came for a little vacation, I went to Cook's Travel Agency and put my problem in their laps—where could a middle-aged gentleman, alone, with no immediate family, go for a quiet rest and enjoyment? It was wartime, of course, so I could not go abroad.

Cook's filled the bill nicely. They sent me up to the Hotel Wentworth in Portsmouth, New Hampshire, and I liked the place so much it has been my summer home for the last dozen years. Wentworth-by-the-Sea has three hundred rooms, and is the beautiful old hotel where the delegates to the Russo-Japanese peace conference stayed in 1905. It was taken over, at just about the time of my arrival, by Major James Barker Smith of Colorado and his charming wife, Margaret. Both had studied hotel management at college, and had run the Broadmoor near Colorado Springs before Jim entered the service. He told me that one night he was awakened at about one o'clock by a call from the registration desk. "Mr. Smith," said the night clerk in a low, tense voice, "the Lord God is here. He says he wants a room."

Jim, thinking he had not heard correctly, just mumbled sleepily, "Oh, all right, give him Room 112."

He had just got back to sleep when the phone rang again. "Mr. Smith," said the night clerk in unmistakable agitation, "the Virgin Mary and the Twelve Apostles are here too. You had better come down!"

Jim leaped into his clothes and hurried downstairs. Father Divine and a score of his followers were there in the lobby, wishing to register under their titular names. Jim got the situation all straightened out, and for several days the heavenly host were made comfortable at the Broadmoor.

The Wentworth has, for many years, been a favorite vacation spot with the Boston elite. This is made up of the old Beacon Hill aristocracy, who look down their noses at the "new" aristocrats, who by-and-large are Irish, and very, very rich.

I can still see old Miss Spooner, nearly ninety years old and confined to a wheelchair, when one of our summer guests started gushing, "I don't see why they say Boston people are cold and standoffish! Those I've met have been so sweet, and so willing to meet you halfway!"

"It is obvious," said Miss Spooner stiffly, "that you have not met the right people!"

She reminded me of my great-aunt in Virginia, whose grandson married a nice girl from New England. At first the bride said nothing about her own family history; but after weeks of listening to her new Randolph relatives brag about their forebears and all their connections, she could bear it no longer. Timidly she mentioned that *her* people had come over on the *Mayflower*. A long, icy silence; then my great-aunt said kindly, "My dear, we are perfectly willing to forget it if you are."

At the next table to mine, in the Wentworth dining room, there usually sits Mrs. McGregor Hall, who refers to her distinguished husband as "the wee McGregor"; and at another table will be the lovely and aristocratic Mrs. Thomas Pierce of St. Louis, a cousin of Mrs. Douglas MacArthur. She has been coming to the Wentworth with her daughter Roberta for years. Then there are the professionals, like Belle Smith, who return to sing and entertain each summer; social directors like Miss Aileen Mitchell; and men from the world of action, like my friend William V. McMenimen, who has helped to build four tunnels under the Hudson River, a six-mile bridge across San Francisco Bay, and countless works and installations all over the world. He is an expert on concrete and cement, and in fifty years of experience has supervised more than eight thousand contracts. No wonder that I can sit for hours and listen to tales of his projects! Another occasional guest is Tracy Flannigan, the Texas oil millionaire whom *Life* showed standing alongside one of his oil wells while a jewelry salesman sold him a hundred-thousand-dollar necklace. His wife was a gentle little woman, and a very devout churchgoer. I was talking to her one evening when another Texas woman, Peggy Dixon, who would rather dance than breathe,

beckoned for my attention as she went gliding by. When the music had stopped, I went over to see her. "You were talking to Mrs. Flannigan," she began, with a twinkle in her eye. "Have you any idea what she is worth on the hoof?"

"On the hoof?" I asked, startled.

"Yes, on the hoof," she repeated. "A cow-country expression—you know, as she stands."

I glanced back at Mrs. Flannigan. I had to remark that, aside from some jewels, she seemed quite simply dressed.

Peggy Dixon laughed at my innocence. "That little black dress is a Hattie Carnegie model," she informed me, "worth, I should imagine, about four hundred dollars. The pearl necklace is the one you must have seen in *Life*—it cost one hundred thousand. Do you see that big emerald ring she is wearing? Well Tracy, her husband, tells me that set him back a cool fifty thousand. The two bracelets may look like costume jewelry, but they're the actual thing—another hundred thousand. And the diamond ring is fifteen carats—another hundred grand, at least. She has to wear the whole kit and caboodle because, as Tracy says, what did he buy them for if they can't be seen? Just as she stands there, on the hoof, you can bet she's worth a half-million dollars!"

I was at the Wentworth in August of 1945 when the atomic bomb was dropped on Hiroshima. Everyone was stunned. We could hardly comprehend the magnitude of such a disaster, and many were stricken with a feeling of guilt. Few could resolve in their own minds whether or not the bomb would have been used had the fateful decision been left up to them. They hoped it would speed the end of the war, but they did not feel equal to such responsibility.

Major Smith asked me to take charge of the services of Thanksgiving which the management and guests decided to hold. I felt very little like it, for although as yet we knew few details about Hiroshima, it was quite apparent that the destruction of life had been extensive and terrible. I prayed for the end of the war to come quickly—the only justification I could think of for using such means—and I remember that I ended with the statement: "We have just

let loose the first of the great atomic bombs, the results of which we cannot foresee. Even though the war ends, the end is not yet. This is just the beginning."

I wish I could add something better to that statement after the intervening years, but what could I say? World War II did come to an end, but the bomb, and its terrible brother the H-bomb, are still very much with us.

CHAPTER XXVIII

Elm Ridge Is Sold—We Move in a Hearse—Kathryna's Annulment—Death of George Arliss—I Am Run Down by a Car—The Kahans—My 25th Anniversary—The Church's Centennial—Mexico City—The Hidden Convent—The Home of Colonel Thomas at Gettysburg—I Pull a String for Eisenhower.

I SOLD ELM RIDGE toward the end of the war. Kathryna would not need it, for she and Courtlandt would have his parents' place in Southampton when he got out of the service. I sold Elm Ridge to some people who wanted its hundred acres to grow gladiolus bulbs for the market, for it was said the New England climate grows the hardiest corms. Practically all of the furnishings were included in the sale except some heirlooms like pictures and china. Kathryna's doll house remained there for safe-keeping, pending further disposal. Eventually we expect to present it to the Museum of the City of New York.

Since it was still wartime, I had a problem in moving these things to New York. Moving vans and trucks were strictly rationed, and were not permitted to cross the state line. Victor Shankey, our sexton and undertaker, proposed a solution. "I have a brand-new hearse," he told me. "Come on, you and I will drive up there and bring the stuff back." So picture two gentlemen in somber black

suits sitting in the front seat of a shiny new hearse, driving very slowly up to Litchfield County—then all the way back to Manhattan at a funereal pace. Hearses were not allowed on the parkways, so we took the back roads. No state troopers stopped us, or got curious to see what was behind the drawn curtains; and it is fortunate they did not, for Victor and I were so amused all the while that we had all we could do to try to look the part.

After the Armistice, Courtlandt was dismissed from the service and the two returned to New York and rented the house belonging to John Foster Dulles' daughter, Mrs. Lillias Hinshaw, up in the Nineties. As I have explained, I had not seen Kathryna since her marriage, and she had hinted at nothing wrong in any of her letters. But now that she and her husband were living in New York and seeing old friends, disquieting rumors began to come to my attention.

Kathryna told me nothing—her loyalty to her husband was complete to the end. But when her health finally broke down and she became so ill that she had to be taken to the hospital, it was no longer possible for her to conceal the fact that her marriage was a failure. Since it fell under the head of a voidable marriage, when all circumstances were known, we had it annulled. Kathryna in due time regained her health and her spirits, and then decided she would like to work for a living. She got a job at Bergdorf-Goodman's as an assistant designer, and did very well at it. In fact, she remained at Bergdorf's for several years, until she married again.

George Arliss died in 1946. He had been head of our Actors' Guild until 1938, when he retired to England and Otis Skinner took over. Arliss had made a great deal of money, especially in pictures, but his estate became heavily involved in taxes and little was left. His beloved wife, Florence, was the niece of Brander Matthews and a talented actress. If you are old enough to remember the film, *Disraeli*, you will recall Florence Arliss as the Prime Minister's wife.

Mrs. Arliss loved opals, all superstition aside, and she had a very fine collection. She left them all in her will to her dear friend Mar-

garet Dale, who is proudest of the fact that, as a child, she appeared with George Holland. "I think I am the only member of his company still living," she tells me, "and this gives me the feeling of being almost a charter member when I come to the Little Church."

It was in 1946, also, that I nearly took my last walk. I had gone up to Sixty-fourth Street to confer with a nice young couple and arrange about their marriage, and when I left they took their dog on a leash and said they would walk me as far as the corner. When we started to cross the street, I noticed a car approaching; but since the light was in my favor, I continued on my way. *Wham!* The next thing I knew I was slammed to the pavement, and I was not aware of anything else until I opened my eyes in New York Hospital.

There was a kind and familiar face leaning over my bed—the face of Dr. William Kahan, whose uncle was a long-standing crony of mine. I kept explaining to Bill that I had a wedding to perform and must get out of bed; but he kept pushing me back and telling me not to move. Finally he got it through my befuddled head that I was suffering a concussion, and must lie very still. Bill Kahan was a good-looking boy, who later married Gertrude Lawrence's daughter, Pamela Gordon. His uncle owned an art shop full of rare and beautiful things on Fifth Avenue, and had presented the church with the famous old woodcut by Dürer which we have hanging on the wall of the Baptistry. This uncle preened himself on his ancient ancestry, and was no little contemptuous of those Russian and Hungarian Jews who, he said, were descended from the Mongols and had hardly any Hebrew blood left at all. He subscribed to the belief that one of the "lost tribes" of Israel had found its way up to Britain and there been assimilated into the English people, and by this reasoning he used to say to me, "Why, you've probably got more Jewish blood in your veins than half these Jews I meet at the synagogue!"

So perhaps you can see why I found it so reassuring to have young Bill Kahan looking after me at the hospital—a family concern, you might say, to see that I survived. In addition to the concussion, I was bruised from head to foot, and my left hip and left leg were

especially painful. Being forbidden to move, I could not shift my weight to relieve the pressure, and a blood clot formed. I was in the hospital six weeks, this first time, then went up to the Wentworth to rest. But the leg was still very painful, and when the house doctor looked at it, he said, "You shouldn't be here at all." He sent me back home, where again I entered the hospital. After that, I was in and out of the hospital for several months, with three serious embolisms, until at last they decided to operate and cut the vein in the leg. That seemed to be the answer and I began to recover, except that even today my leg is as good as the weatherman. I can tell when it is going to rain some twenty-four hours in advance, and in regard to hurricanes, I have found it a great deal more reliable than the radio predictions. Incidentally, the car that ran me down, I learned later, was driven by a man and his wife whom I had united in marriage! But they insisted it was quite accidental.

By April of 1948 I had been at the Little Church for twenty-five years. I asked my Vestry not to make anything special of this event, since the church itself would be celebrating its centennial in the fall, and I felt that was enough. However, my staff took things into its own hands and gave a fine dinner for me at the old Lafayette Hotel. All my dear friends and co-workers were there, and presented me with an illuminated parchment, richly bound in scarlet leather, which commemorated my "quarter-century of unselfish service."

I was touched by the wires and letters that arrived from clergymen and friends, and one of the warmest of these was from Mollie's cousin, Hoffman Nickerson, who is now executor of the Hoffman estate. He is the youngest grandson of old Dean Hoffman, and ably carries on the family tradition for philanthropy and learning. Though not himself a clergyman, he has written some nine or ten books on theology, and another on United States history.

When October came, the old church celebrated her one hundredth birthday, and the rejoicing and celebration went on for days. Franklin Coates, our organist, had long rehearsed the boys' choir for this special occasion, and the singing was never more beautiful.

All the altars were smothered with flowers sent by members of the Little Church Family from all over the world, and the stream of visitors and well-wishers was endless. Again there was a banquet, with the Bishop in attendance and many church dignitaries. After all, there are not many churches anywhere today—as I pointed out in my speech—that can boast of having had only three rectors in the span of a century; and I made it clear that the privilege of serving as that third rector had been the joy of my life.

I had been to Mexico only once in my life, nearly thirty years before, and then had got out of the country as fast as I could get. It had been while my mother, sister Alice, and myself had been vacationing in Southern California, that some friends volunteered to drive us over the border to Tijuana. It was a town, they insisted, no American should miss. So we drove to Tijuana, and as soon as we got out of our car in the plaza, we accepted the services of a Mexican guide. He must have thought we had some strange ideas of diversion, for he promptly led us into a courtyard where six blindfolded men were lined up against a wall. We did not even have time to grasp the situation, before there was a sharp command from an officer and a platoon of soldiers raised rifles and fired! The six men fell dead. We were so utterly appalled that we rushed back to our car and tore out of town as fast as we could drive. My poor mother and sister were ill enough to faint—and as for me, well it took me thirty years even to think of going to Mexico again. But meantime so many returning friends had raved about its beauties that I decided to give it another try.

I flew down by way of Dallas, leaving LaGuardia Airfield early in the morning and eating my dinner that night in Mexico City. Surely it would be impossible to exaggerate the beauties of the Valley of Mexico! Snow-capped volcanoes circled the horizon, and the air at that height—nearly a mile and half in the air—was sparkling as wine. In the morning when you got up there were so many things to see, so many palaces, pyramids, Aztec temples and museums to visit that you hardly knew where to begin. I tried to see

them all. I flew to Acapulco, that jewel of the Pacific dotted about with the homes of Hollywood stars, and I motored to Taxco to prowl through the silver shops, and visited Cuernavaca to see murals by Rivera decorating the walls of a palace built by Cortes.

In Puebla, I explored the hidden convent of Santa Monica which had only been discovered by the police in 1934. For sixty-six years it had remained concealed behind the walls of an apartment house in the very heart of the city, directly across from the police station! There a whole company of nuns, after the suppression of closed convents by Juarez, had lived out their lives in secrecy and silence for two thirds of a century. The place is now a national monument, and a visit to it makes one wonder how any government can imagine for a moment that it can suppress religious faith.

All Americans in Mexico have to see one bullfight, so I went too. I had heard a great deal about the beauty of this sport, its grace and its form, and I will admit it is a magnificent spectacle. But after two horses had been killed, and one matador gored in the thigh, I left the arena with a feeling of sickness. I never shall go to a bullfight again. Once more it seemed to me, as it had in Italy, that the Latin temperament is lacking in compassion for animals. But what defied my understanding was how the American tourists who helped to fill the stands—and among them quite a few women of apparent refinement—could yell and cheer even louder than the Mexicans!

After the trip to Mexico, I flew back to spend the remainder of my vacation with Colonel Thomas Shipley Thomas, my present senior warden. His lovely home is at Charmian, not far from Gettysburg, and of course the country round about is largely populated by Pennsylvania Dutch. What a wonderful people they are! The thing that impressed me most was the importance they place upon their children's practical education. No matter how well off the family may be, nor what higher education the children may receive, they still must learn to make a living. Colonel and Mrs. Thomas had two maids who arrived every morning in a large automobile. One was their cook, and the other their waitress. They were fine-looking girls, who could have entered a drawing room anywhere, but dressed

in their white, starched uniforms, they were also competent and well-trained servants. When they are married, they will be able to take charge of any kind of household. I don't suppose all American girls would care to work in someone else's kitchen, but it is a fine preparation for marriage. I strongly believe in the old-fashioned virtue of learning a trade.

Colonel Thomas has an inexhaustible knowledge of the Civil War, and he showed me every inch of the battlefield at Gettysburg and all the surrounding country. The little resort town of Blue Ridge Summit, down there near the border, is famous for its coolness in summertime, and for having been the home of Wallis Warfield Simpson. It also has its own small Church of the Transfiguration, and while I was there, President Eisenhower was expected to come and unveil a window to the memory of a veteran killed in Korea. The President couldn't make it, however, and so at the last moment I was asked to take his place. I have pulled a great many cords for unveilings in my lifetime, and made many speeches, but this is the only time I ever stood in for the nation's Chief Executive!

CHAPTER XXIX

Some Curates I Have Known—Interviewing Candidates for the Seminary—Psychological Difficulties—Bishops I Have Known—Bishop Manning and Censorship—Mrs. Averell Harriman and Lotteries—The Diocese Today—Retired Bishops.

I SUPPOSE all rectors think of themselves as the best curates who ever served a rector, and their own apprenticeship as the best ever rendered. I am guilty of this myself. In the last third of a century I have employed a good many curates to assist me, and some of them were excellent, some were just adequate, and some—well, the less said of them the better.

One of the best curates I ever had was Father Claude Reader, who came here from England. He used to say he felt me behind him "like Simon Legree," ready to pounce upon him if he didn't handle the vessels correctly, or sing the service just right! Actually I was standing there admiring his work, for he had a dramatic style at the altar and an excellent voice. Another fine curate was the Rev. Harold Lemoyne, the Harold who drove us all over England in 1935. Today he is one of the leading rectors in the diocese of Long Island.

The Rev. W. L. Phillips is a third curate I remember with a great deal of fondness. He had the unusual trait of laboring just as hard

and conscientiously when the rector was away as when he was in town. With him worked Father Harrison Rockwell, who gradually became immersed in the teachings of Mary Baker Eddy and turned to Christian Science. I recall how deeply torn he was by this inner struggle, and how hard he prayed. He wanted to become a Christian Science healer, but he did not have the sort of outgoing quality required for such work. Eventually he realized this limitation himself, and was content to become secretary to Bishop Manning. Although he remained a member of the Christian Science church, he helped run the Episcopal diocese of New York, and did a very good job at it. The Rev. George Heald also was with me for a number of years—a most competent clergyman and excellent cook. He has his own church nowadays, in the diocese of Chicago. And another curate I am proud to have known is Father MacLaughlin of Holy Cross, who was so learned in ritual that I put him in charge of Judge Luce's funeral. He now is a missionary in Central America.

There have been other curates whose names I will not mention for obvious reasons—but a brief description of their shortcomings may give some idea of what the Church is up against in finding personnel. One man, poor soul, was a secret alcoholic—he went from one parish to another, always reforming, always about to do better, to the very day he died. Another had such a quick-fingered way with checks we had to ask him to leave. He went out one day to look for a parishioner of ours, a very rich man who had a periodic way of disappearing from home. He found him, to be sure—but next morning the man's wife phoned me and said, "There is a clergyman here, Dr. Ray, who asks me to cash a check of my husband's made out to him. If the money is for the church, I will honor it gladly. Do you know anything about it?" Naturally, I told her not to honor the check. Nor were we honored much longer by this curate's company, after his return.

Yet another curate I had was a most cheerful person, until after his wife died. Then he became long-faced and morose, and was never seen to smile. We were all quite sympathetic, at first, when his sermons were filled with allusions to his personal loss, and when

he would wind up in tears. But after a while the congregation began to complain. I was just wondering how I could handle the matter without hurting his feelings, when he barged in, all smiles, and announced that he was engaged! The second marriage followed as quickly as custom would permit, and after that his sermons were as gay and inspired as anyone could wish.

I have also employed a good many part-time clergymen, as summer replacements. One is the Rev. Father Orin Griesmeyer, rector of a parish in Chicago, who has been coming to me in July and August for the last fifteen or eighteen years. I know I can always leave things safely in Father Griesmeyer's hands. He has a good voice, and one must have a good voice to sing mass in a high church like ours.

For the last thirty years I have been on the standing committee in New York which interviews candidates for the General Theological Seminary. These young men who wish to enter the ministry have all been seen by psychiatrists, and you have their reports before you as you try to estimate their characters and pass on their fitness. Long before the Kinsey report came out, we were keenly on the alert for sexual deviates, for it is an old story that many of these unfortunates turn to the monastic callings—as indeed they do to the arts, the stage, and many allied crafts. I have been asked why homosexuality seems to be a greater problem with the Episcopal and Anglican orders than with the Roman Catholic. Assuming it is so, I believe it is because the Roman training begins much earlier than ours. A boy preparing for the Roman brotherhoods or priesthood may well start his indoctrination in his very early teens, and be wisely guided by elders who understand the dangers and problems. Our candidates come to us later in life, sometimes after a period of personal confusion, when undesirable habits may already have been formed. We have no alternative then but to weed these people out—not from condemnation or puritanical censure—but because they would have to work with choirboys and acolytes and often serve as counselors to youth. Weaknesses that are regret-

table enough in other walks of life can, in a churchman, spell utter disaster.

The bishops I have known have been, by and large, most praiseworthy men. There was Bishop Hugh Miller Thompson back home in Mississippi, when I was a boy. He was succeeded there by Bishop Theodore Gratton, the man who gave me permission to transfer to New York. Next came Bishop Henry Cadman Potter, of the New York diocese, who crammed too many wafers into my mouth when I came to Communion; and after him, Bishop David Hummel Greer, who consecrated me as deacon, then as a priest. He was followed by Bishop Charles Sumner Birch, who lived only a short time, and was succeeded by Bishop Herbert Shipman, one of the most popular men who ever held that office.

When Bishop Greer died, Bishop Arthur Selven Lloyd was Suffragan Bishop here in New York. He had been Bishop of Virginia, and was a kindly man with a gentle sense of humor. Whenever he came down to the Little Church to hold confirmation services, he would pretend all sorts of objections when he tried to get into the miter and cope. "Oh now, Ray, this cope!" he would protest with a grimace. "How am I ever going to move in it? And this miter! How do you expect me to keep it on my head?" I would assure him every time that he didn't have to wear either—for, of course, Southern churches do not use such vestments. But he would struggle into them, saying, "Oh, I wouldn't dream of disappointing you Northerners! Let us have all the trimmings." Actually, as his daughter confided to me after his death, he hugely enjoyed dressing up for this ceremony. "He always looked forward to coming to Transfiguration," she told me. "And he especially loved getting into that miter and cope!"

It was Bishop Lloyd who came down here to conduct the funeral services when Valerie Hadden died. She had planned all the ceremonies herself, even to the music. One of her selections, I remember, was "The Rosary," which of course is not church music at all, but a secular song. Some of Valerie's friends were quite shocked

by this, and thought the song should not be sung at a high requiem mass. I deferred to the Bishop—should we abide by Valerie's wishes, or try to please her friends? "Why, follow instructions!" he decided without hesitation. "It's Valerie's funeral, let her have what she wanted!"

After Bishop Lloyd came the greatest of our prelates—Bishop William Thomas Manning. Bishop Manning was a fighter. Like Woodrow Wilson he was a man of high principles; and again like Wilson, he was often misjudged. He believed that as leader of the church he must take a stand, and he did not flinch from what he regarded as an official duty.

During the Depression, for example, it was proposed that legalizing lotteries in New York might contribute funds to help relieve distress. Bishop Manning was violently opposed. He got up one Sunday in the pulpit at St. Bartholomew's Church and declared, "It is a great pity that our state legislature should even, for the purpose of relieving distress, contemplate legislation which would give a picture of sanction to gambling."

It happened that Mrs. Averell Harriman was a member of St. Bartholomew's, as well as head of the national conference for the legalizing of lotteries. The next day she issued a statement to the effect that the first Episcopal church in America, the one near Cheshire, Connecticut, had been built with funds raised in a lottery run by Samuel Seabury, the first American bishop! But Bishop Manning was unmoved; and to this day religious bodies, especially the various Protestant sects, rush to man the barricades whenever legalization is suggested.

I did not always agree with Bishop Manning on the positions he took. For example, in 1931 the Guild planned to present *Brief Moment* for its benefit performance, because it was a popular comedy by S. N. Behrman, and had Francine Larrimore and Alexander Woollcott in its leading roles. Bishop Manning asked us to call it off, however, after he received a number of letters condemning it as objectionable. Mollie and I saw the play in the company of Bishop Charles J. Gilbert, and we all thought it very amusing and

in no way censorable. Nevertheless we canceled the play, and I told our members frankly, "We are doing this solely to honor the wishes of the Bishop, who is after all our president." We substituted for it *The Lady with a Lamp*, which was about Florence Nightingale—and, with all due respect to Dame Edith Evans, whom I love and admire, it was very dull and respectable.

Of course, this was a time anyway when there was a great deal of to-do about censorship in the theater, for John S. Sumner and his Society for the Suppression of Vice were both riding high. I never approved of censorship, always maintaining that the theater should clean its own house—and that, in any event, the legitimate theater is adult entertainment. I agreed with H. L. Mencken that censorship "is always stupid and almost always dishonest. The public taste is sufficient check for ordinary purposes."

But aside from such differences of opinion, I had tremendous admiration for Bishop Manning, and grew to love the man personally. He always stood by his clergymen stanchly and loyally. You knew you could depend on him, for he was solid as a rock. Furthermore, for all his austerity in public, he was kindness itself. He baptized Kathryna, prepared her for confirmation; and when Mollie died, he came down here personally to take care of the services. I have hanging in my closet a miter and cope which he gave me as a present, and I often touch them when I reach for my clothes, as though touching a friend. Bishop Manning will go down into history as one of the great cathedral-builders, for he raised almost all the money for St. John the Divine, which was so largely built and embellished in his time. St. John's, when finished, will be the largest Gothic cathedral in the world, and equal in loveliness to many of Europe's most celebrated shrines. I was up there the other day for a diocesan convention, and when it was over I entered the chapel in which the Bishop is entombed. There he lies in effigy on top of his sarcophagus, all swathed in his vestments, and all turned to stone. It is such a curious feeling to see someone you knew well lying before you in this petrified state, as though struck by the Medusa—and especially a man who was so vital and friendly when he lived.

Manning was succeeded, at his death, by Charles Kendall Gilbert, one of the sweetest-tempered men who ever drew breath. Bishop Gilbert was much too mild to take a stand against anyone. If a problem arose, he would turn it over promptly to a standing committee. Everything was talked about, and nothing was done. That is why living saints do not make good executives.

The man who runs the diocese now is a very fine choice, a good man in the job. He is Horace B.B. Donegan, whom I knew well when he was rector of St. James' in Baltimore. He is an Englishman by birth, and before taking orders he studied for the stage. In Baltimore he was rather irreverently known, behind his back, as the "Debutante's Delight"—for he was a very handsome fellow and considered quite a catch. But he somehow escaped, and still is unmarried. His mother presides over his household, which is a splendid residence built as part of the cathedral. In running the diocese, Bishop Donegan is ably assisted by his Suffragan Bishop the Rev. Charles Francis Boynton. Boynton's father was one of my professors at the Seminary, and Boynton himself was for some years a teacher at Williams and various other colleges. And of course, the diocese has benefited greatly from the devoted services of such laymen as Edward K. Warren and Clarence Michalis who, as trustees and advisers, have helped to guide the finances of the church.

Bishops retire at the age of seventy-two, and while they retain a place in the House of Bishops, they are left without a diocese. This means there are many retired bishops around, whom one is always running into, and quite a few are honored friends of mine. There is, for example, Bishop Thomas Frank Gaylor of Tennessee, who for many years was a distinguished teacher at Suwanee. He now lives nearby, and because he preached many a sermon at the Little Church when Dr. Houghton was rector, he still retains an honored place at the altar. Dr. Gaylor was long the Presiding Bishop of all the Episcopal churches in America, which in our country is the equivalent of being Archbishop of Canterbury. Year after year at the national convention, we introduce a motion to adopt the title of Archbishop in America, and so end the confusion; but arch-

bishops went out of popular favor in 1776, and it seems unlikely they will ever come back. Bishop Henry St. George Tucker of Virginia was another Presiding Bishop who often came to the Little Church to celebrate a service. He was over six feet tall, and so simple a person that he would wear nothing more elaborate than his bishop's chimere which is just a short upper robe. I would never dream of asking him to don miter and cope, or do anything that he was not in the habit of doing, for I revered him always as God's good man, and thought him perfect as he was.

All of these retired bishops are quite happy to help out with their services, and Bishop Donegan leans on them heavily to preside at confirmations and other such ceremonies. In fact, the New York diocese is so large that it would be almost impossible to keep up with the work were it not for these competent men who are past seventy-two. Thus, one may be confirmed in the New York diocese by a Bishop of Rhode Island or a Bishop of Honolulu, or a Bishop of Liberia! It may sound a little startling, but it solves the problem very nicely of what to do with the elder statesmen of the Church—and I think other professions might well take note.

Only two other Protestant denominations have bishops, by the way—the Methodist Episcopal, and the Scandinavian Lutheran. The Scandinavian Lutherans, who hail from Norway, Sweden, or Denmark, have an elaborate ritual very similar to ours. The Methodists hold over the office of Bishop from the days when they still belonged to the Anglican church. While most people think of the Methodist service as being quite plain, in certain of their churches it is very elaborate. At the beautiful Christ Church Methodist on Park Avenue, for example, the ritual is so high that I once said to its rector, Dr. Ralph W. Sockman, "Why don't you come over and join us? We'll make you a bishop!" "Will you promise?" he laughed, for he knew I was joking. But all the same, this church has holy communion at the early morning service, and many other trimmings that an old-time Wesleyan would never have approved.

AFTERWORD

En Pantoufles—*Secretaries and Staff—Hoaxes and Handouts—My Christmas Dinners—The Fielding Taylors—Mrs. Robert R. Baker—The Archbishop's Flaming Plum Pudding—Isabelle's Matchless Mince Pies.*

I NO LONGER go to the theater as much as I used to; not that I love the theater less, but as the white hairs gather, I love my slippers and my fireside more. Once in a while I still go out to dinner, but I find it very pleasant, when six o'clock strikes, to sit down with a Scotch and soda in one hand, and with the other to switch on the television set and let it bring me the news. I am fond of Ed Murrow and John Daly and the friendly Bob Considine; but I have never ceased to miss Elmer Davis in his retirement—he has never had a peer in the handling of the news.

People often ask me why I do not retire—but what should I retire to? I would rather be rector of the Little Church Around the Corner than anything else in the world, and I shall leave this beloved place only as my predecessors left it—by way of St. Joseph's Chapel and out the lich-gate. But of course I have learned to "delegate authority" as the business executives put it, meaning that I have learned to pass the buck and find somebody else to do part of my work. Laura Stray, for example, my personal secretary—red-headed

though she is—has a marvelous way of dealing with people. She was formerly a teacher at The Castle, on the Hudson, and was brought to us by my sister when Miss Mason died. I can leave to Laura Stray the entire job of getting out the weekly leaflet, answering much of my mail, and even signing my name. I have warned her she may yet end up in jail as a forger. The other assistant on whom I rely very strongly is Mrs. Elizur Smith, our church secretary. Her husband wrote a number of books on New England folk history, and was an authority on Nantucket. And lastly, I could not manage a day without Cord A. Dobier, the devoted Englishman who serves as our verger. He is the first to arrive in the morning to open the church, and he is the last to leave at night, seven days a week, the whole year round; no material rewards can ever repay this sort of dedication.

We still get our problems. Not long ago a well-dressed woman got past Mrs. Smith on the plea of being in very urgent need. There seemed to be nothing phony about her. Her story was that she was about to be evicted from her hotel, but would have money on the morrow. All she needed in the meantime was the loan of ten dollars. She was employed as a receptionist at a well-known beauty salon, and I could call there to check; but she could not draw on her salary in advance, it would be too embarrassing. I did not call the salon, but gave her the money. The next morning I got suspicious and checked—she never had worked there. Farewell to the ten-spot! But that was not all . . .

The same afternoon I again had visitors. This time it was an emotional young woman of thirty, accompanied by an elderly Victorian lady, complete with black bonnet and widow's peak. The young woman told me almost hysterically how she had been a head saleswoman at one of the leading Fifth Avenue shops until a few days before, when she had been let go. Now she and her mother were in the direst need.

Having just been stung once, I acted a bit cautious and began to question her. She was indignant! All her life she had supported the Church, and now that she needed help, she was met with doubt and

insult. She wept and stormed. Her elegant old mother tried to quiet her down. "My dear, the doctor is right. He is trying to help you. Try to be calm." But calm she would not be—and I, completely beaten, ended by giving her twenty dollars instead of the ten she had originally asked for.

Once she had the money, serenity reigned. But now, instead of leaving, she said, "I want to tell you my story." Her husband was in a pententiary in Pennsylvania, she said, and was a trusty. Each week he sent her some money, but she had not heard from him now for several weeks—that was why she was so broke. Would I be kind enough to write to the penitentiary and make inquiries for her?

I took the name and address of her husband and his warden, and she and her mother departed quite peacefully. We wrote at once to make the inquiries—and back came the answer: there was no such prisoner, there never had been such a prisoner, they knew nothing about him. We later found out, through the Welfare Council, that these two women had been going from church to church in the city, telling the selfsame story. The day they came to me they had already been to the priest at St. Stephen's, and, before pulling their hoax, had gone to confession!

Yes, sometimes you wonder— Still and all, whenever something like this happens, I think of that good man who was also our founder. "I pity the man who has never been taken in," Dr. Houghton said to a friend. And that about sums it up.

One advantage of growing old is that one no longer has to worry so much about the occasional female who is suffering from delusions. There was one awful day down in Texas when the wife of one of my parishioners entered my office with a fur coat wrapped around her, carefully closed the door, then threw the coat open—nothing underneath! I screeched for help as loud as any damsel in distress, and my secretary came flying to the rescue. Another time, before my marriage, I was so persistently pursued that I had to let it be known around town that I was an oblate of the Order of the Holy

Cross, and therefore vowed to celibacy. In neither case, I hastened to add, was it because I myself was so irresistible, but because the preacher, like the doctor and teacher, appears as a father image to women and is a natural target for those who suffer aberrations. But I learned long ago always to keep my office door ajar when a lady was present—the simplest insurance policy against this particular kind of occupational hazard.

Once a year, at Yuletide, I get down the best china—a priceless set of plates once owned by Napoleon, each bearing the arms of a different Pope—and I give a dinner party. As a Southerner, I have always set great store by Christmas. When I was a child, the "big house" on the plantation would be decorated with holly and mistletoe and garlands of evergreen, and early in the morning we children would come down to the fireplace where the stockings were hung. But instead of candy and toys in our stockings, we would find Roman candles, sky rockets, and firecrackers of all kinds.

Now we would rush out into the yard, where we would be met by all the Negroes of the plantation, grownups and children alike who would cry out, "Merry Christmas! Good morning! Christmas gift! Christmas gift!"

"Christmas gift yourself!" we would call back in unison, and begin to explode the fireworks and sparklers, to the vast enjoyment of everyone. In this respect, our celebration of Christmas in Mississippi was much closer to the Mexican *posada* or to the Fourth of July up North.

Meanwhile, the master and mistress of the house would have brought forth a large bowl of eggnog, brimming with Christmas spirits, and amidst shouts of "Merry Christmas" and "Christmas gift" from the household servants, cups of eggnog would be passed around, with various-sized presents wrapped up in gay paper.

After the handing out of presents, the family and guests would gather in the dining room for a long Southern breakfast. This would be a leisurely, drawn-out affair with heaps of country hams, smoked sausages, waffles, fruits and coffee—all helped down by plenty of

eggnog. By the time it was over, everyone left the table happy and gay, and proceeded to church. And after church came dinner, where countless relatives showed up to help partake of the stuffed turkeys, Virginia hams, and blazing plum pudding.

I missed these mellow Christmases so much when I came up North that even at the Seminary I instituted the custom of an eggnog party. Then, after Mollie and I were married, we expanded our holiday celebrations to include all our large family connections and friends.

For years, we would entertain the family at noon in the rectory; then, at night, we would go to the Fielding Taylors' for dinner. Dr. Fielding Taylor, a well-known physician, came from the Fielding Lewis clan of Virginia, and at his house we met many of the people who later became our intimates. Among these was Dr. John Randolph Page, the eye-ear-throat specialist who, being a Randolph, would never send me a bill. Or at least being a Southerner, he would never send a bill, for doctors in the South will never accept any money from the clergy. Professional courtesy.

Mrs. Fielding Taylor would always have sixteen or eighteen people at dinner, and her Christmas board was by far the most beautiful I have ever seen. At my own Christmas dinners I try to copy the effect of her floral decorations, and sometimes succeed. Peggy Wood and her husband, William Walling, are among the guests who return each year, and one season she described the rectory table in an issue of *Gourmet*:

"Variegated holly and scarlet carnations bloom in a great silver bowl at the center of the table," she wrote. "Candelabra hold the steadily burning tapers, their flames echoed in the burnished surfaces of silver nut and candy dishes. Wine glasses and goblets of fine Venetian glass, etched in a lacy pattern of gold, parade before each place setting."

But the effect that usually draws the greatest admiration is the large set-piece up over the mantel. This is an annual present from Mrs. Robert R. Baker, heiress to the Montgomery Ward fortune. Mrs. Baker and her husband are old friends of Canon Stimpson,

whom I replaced in Florence; and in fact I first met them when we were in Italy. They have so many homes they hardly know where to live next—one home near Milwaukee, where I once stayed as a guest; another home in Chicago, a castle-like residence along the Lake Shore; a villa in Florence; and a year-round apartment at the Savoy-Plaza. But what Mrs. Baker really likes best is to spend the summer in a hotel at Atlantic City! There living is simple, and she likes the smell of the sea.

Of course, Kathryna is always here at my Christmas dinner along with my two grandchildren, Ricky and Leslie; and my sister, who takes care of the vast correspondence with the Little Church Family; Peggy Wood and her husband; William Beebe and his wife, Elswyth Thane, when they are in New York; and other guests to the number of a dozen and a half. Isabelle is too old to come out of retirement, as she did for a while, to cook the Christmas dinner, but we still use her recipes. I carve the turkey, and we have all the things I had as a boy—the sugar-spiced hams, the golden roast potatoes, the tangy mashed turnips, the emerald string beans, and a salad made with avocados and cucumbers, flavored with mint. The mint makes this salad very refreshing. After this a little fruit may appear on the table, accompanied by cheese—and of course, all through the meal the right wines have been decanted. Then, just as everyone is sighing with contentment, the climax comes in a blazing grand finale—it is the Flaming Plum Pudding, made from a recipe which has been handed down the generations, and which originated in the Archbishop's Palace at the Cathedral of York.

I promised you the recipe for this famous plum pudding, and also for Isabelle's fruitcake and matchless mince pies. So now, with her permission, I shall append them all at the end of this book. Extravagant they may be with eggs and with butter, and even more demanding of patience and time—but like my Napoleon plates, they are gems of their kind and worth the extra trouble. My blessing upon you, and may you enjoy them in archiepiscopal style!

The Archbishop's Flaming Plum Pudding

(This makes six large puddings. You may cut the recipe down to size, if you wish.)

Combine:
2 lbs. beef-kidney suet, finely chopped
2 lbs. candied cherries
2 lbs. currants
2 lbs. Malaga raisins
2 lbs. Sultana raisins
2 lbs. tart apples, finely chopped
2 lbs. blanched almonds
2 lbs. light brown sugar
grated rind of 4 oranges
grated rind of 4 lemons
8 cups dry sieved bread crumbs
1 tbs. mixed cinnamon, nutmeg mace

Stir in:
12 eggs, beaten
4 bottles ale
2 cups brandy
2 cups rum

Mix well.

Stir in:
½ tbs. baking soda
2 cups flour, or enough to make a thick batter

Fill well-buttered baking molds three-quarters full and tie a heavy muslin cloth securely over the top. Place the molds on a rack in a large kettle with boiling water about halfway up the molds. The water should not be high enough to boil over and into the puddings. Or put the molds in a steamer. Cook for three hours. Cool before storing.

When ready to serve, reheat the pudding in a kettle of water or steamer for about one hour. Remove the muslin, invert the pudding on a serving dish, and sprinkle it with sugar. Pour over the pudding ½ cup warm brandy and ignite. *Serve flaming!*

Isabelle's Mince Pie

(Makes two pies.)

Combine: 1 lb. currants
1 lb. Malaga raisins
1 lb. Sultana raisins
1 lb. candied cherries
1 lb. suet, finely chopped
1 lb. brown sugar
1 lb. tart apples, finely chopped

Stir in: 1 tbs. mixed nutmeg, clove, cinnamon

Moisten with: 1 pint brandy
1 pint ale

Store the mincemeat, covered, in the refrigerator for one week, stirring thoroughly every day.

Line two 10-inch pie plates with flaky dough and fill them with mincemeat. Cover the mincemeat with a thin layer of dough, flute the edges, and make several slits in the top. Bake the pies in a hot oven (450°) for about ten minutes. Reduce the temperature to moderate, and continue to bake about 35 minutes, or until the crust is golden. While the pies are hot, pour ¼ cup brandy through the slits in the crust into each pie. Serve warm.

The Rector's Fruitcake

1 lb. butter
2 cups brown sugar
9 eggs
6 cups flour
1½ tbs. baking powder
1 tbs. each cinnamon, allspice, clove, and nutmeg
2 cups brandy
2 lbs. currants
1 lb. Malaga raisins
½ lb. each of candied cherries and blanched almonds
¼ lb. mixed orange and lemon peel tossed in ½ cup flour

Cream the butter, add the sugar gradually, and cream together until light and fluffy. Stir in the nine eggs, well-beaten. Sift the six cups of flour with the baking powder and the cinnamon, allspice, clove and nutmeg. Stir the dry ingredients into the batter

alternately with the brandy. Fold in the two pounds of currants and the one pound of Malaga raisins, together with the orange and lemon peel, sliced, and tossed lightly with a half cup of flour.

When finished mixing, turn the batter into two large loaf pans lined with buttered, heavy brown paper. Bake in a slow oven (250°) for about two hours, or until the cake is done and a straw inserted in the center comes out clean.

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ABOUT DR. J. H. RANDOLPH RAY

DR. J. H. RANDOLPH RAY, *third rector of The Little Church Around the Corner, was born on a Mississippi plantation, the youngest son of one of Lee's officers. After preliminary skirmishes with newspaper work and the law, he studied for the Episcopal ministry and is still fondly remembered for his seven years as dean of St. Matthew's Cathedral in Dallas. Called in 1923 to the Little Church, he at once established the Episcopal Actors' Guild and began to strengthen the bonds between that church and the people of the theater—a relationship that dates back 75 years to the days of Joseph Jefferson.*

Since The Little Church Around the Corner tops the world's record for marriages, Dr. Ray believes he has married more couples than any other man living—somewhat more, he estimates, than 65,000. Today, at 71, he lives alone in the picturesque rectory at 1 East Twenty-ninth Street, still guarding the famous church that he made into a national shrine, and still carrying on a full program of work.

ABOUT VILLA STILES

VILLA STILES, *daughter of a well-known bandleader, is a native New Englander who has adopted New York State as her home. Married to a theater exhibitor, she now lives amid "the rolling hills of Kensico," so frequently mentioned in this book. There she divides her time between writing, gardening, and collecting books on the French Revolution. Although she has written extensively for newspapers, magazine and radio, she is best known for her book collaborations—notably with the late Dale Carnegie on his two best sellers,* How to Win Friends and Influence People *and* How to Stop Worrying and Start Living.

background of our ... -gate. This is not unusu... – the outlines of our lich-gate, with its turned-up eaves and the green leaves behind it, must be familiar through pictures to thousands of people who have never been here in person. The Little Church Around the Corner is a household name. It is the church with the beautiful Bridal Altar where romantic young couples flock to get married. It is the official place of worship of hundreds of actors. It is the historic shrine where one goes to see stained-glass windows commemorating the faces of Edwin Booth, Joseph Jefferson, John Drew, Richard Mansfield; and bronze tablets to Stephen Vincent Benét, William Rose Benét, Will Rogers, O. Henry. It is the haven where runaway slaves were harbored in the days of the Civil War, and where the hungry were fed in the days of the breadlines. For the last third of a century it has been my life.

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